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## CURRENT COMMENT.

THE walkout of the newspaper-pressmen in New York was what is called an "outlaw" strike; that is, it was a spontaneous withdrawal by men combined in a local union, without aid and comfort from their national officers. For eighteen months the pressmen had been working under conditions imposed by an arbitral decision which, they asserted, imposed undue hardship upon them. The arbitral award expired 1 September. The task of negotiating a new agreement was in the hands of Mr. George L. Berry, the national president of the pressmen, and he seemed to go about the matter in an uncommonly leisurely fashion. On the night of 17 September he was to make a report to the men, but he did not appear at their meeting, and a delegation could not find him at his modest quarters at the Waldorf. The men then voted unanimously to strike, and the next morning the larger metropolitan dailies failed to appear.

THREE years ago there was a similar walkout in the job-printing and book-printing offices. On that occasion Mr. Berry excommunicated the local union and replaced it with his own machine, in which action he was sustained by Mr. Gompers's hierarchy. In the current dispute, he also formally disbanded the local union, and after issuing various ukases against it for a few days, he announced that he had negotiated a new agreement with the publishers, and not only ordered the strikers to return to work forthwith, but sent telegrams to locals in other cities ordering them to send strike-breakers to New York. Irrespective of the merits of the controversy, this seems an extraordinary development. To the unbiased outsider, it sometimes appears that national officers of Mr. Gompers's type are a superfluous luxury for the workers. It is increasingly difficult to determine which side of an industrial controversy such captains of labour represent. The strikers emphatically repudiated Mr. Berry's action, and as we go to press they have appealed to the higher clergy of the city to arbitrate their case. We gather from this desperate shift that the odds have been too much for them.

SOMETIMES our British brethren give us a severe pain, and we do not mind saying that this is one of the times. We have before us the *Saturday Review* and the *Spectator* for 1 September, and the special cause of our dis-

comfort is the comment that these two journals, and especially the former, have passed upon the Belgian reply to Lord Curzon's note. The Belgian proposal that material damages shall be given priority over pensions amounts to a suggestion that the British share in the reparations-payments shall be reduced from twenty-two per cent to eighteen, and the *Saturday Review* does not take kindly to this recasting of accounts. Then, too, the intimation of M. Poincaré that France will not pay Britain until Germany pays France is virtually equivalent, the *Review* believes, to repudiation. The editor says, "It is always Britain that is called on to pay, pay, pay"; and, in more measured terms, the *Spectator* also makes objection to the Belgian proposal for "still further sacrifices" on the part of Great Britain.

IN all this there is no sign or shadow or slightest intimation of the fact that the British Government, in all its motions for the reconsideration of the reparations-question, has never once hinted that the German colonies might also be thrown into the pot. France is concerned primarily with reparations, Great Britain with colonies; and the French have as good a right as the British to the airs of injured innocence. The Germans must be let off, in order that British trade with the Continent may be built up, but the solid block of British territory from Cairo to the Cape must not be broken. Oh, no, for reasons of morality, it must not be! As the *Spectator's* columnist says (and this is the very painfulest utterance of all): "In many quarters British policy, owing to lack of correct information, has been regarded in the United States as based on purely materialistic considerations and not on moral grounds as it is." - Well now, really!

AFTER a period of deliberation covering several months the British Government has sent a letter to Secretary Hughes regretting that it can not see its way clear to grant his request for extending the traditional three-mile limit to twelve miles for the purpose of protecting American virtue against the informal importation of hard liquor. We have no doubt that Mr. Baldwin and his associates derived considerable entertainment from this episode, and we are not inclined to begrudge it to them, for surely, what with one thing and another, they have been sadly in need of comic relief of late. By way of softening his answer and showing that he had no intention of twisting the American Government's whiskers, and incidentally by way of demonstrating his own sense of humour, Lord Curzon soberly assured Mr. Hughes that the whole matter would be discussed at the forthcoming Imperial Conference. This is an amusing and harmless afterthought, and it appears to give considerable comfort to the pickers-up of unconsidered trifles in our State Department.

EVER since Mr. Hughes sent his twelve-mile proposal to the British Foreign Office, the State Department has been giving forth veiled intimations that the British Government looked with favour on his idea. This preposterous optimism somewhat puzzled us, and we were finally compelled to put it down to the Department's persistent aversion to realities. Lord Curzon could doubtless think of numberless international complications that might arise



from establishing the precedent involved in formal acquiescence in such a change. In addition certain practical reasons made a refusal inevitable. Before the blessed dispensation of prohibition the American people consumed annually 150 million gallons of domestic spirits, fifty million gallons of domestic wines, and two billion gallons of domestic beer. Since this domestic production was demobilized, certain British-business interests have built up a mighty export trade by way of relieving the American drought. Shares in some of these enterprises are advertised in the reputable British press, and distinguished persons of formidable political influence participate. This business of quick and generous returns is now firmly established. It forms a tidy item in the thinning statistics of British export trade, and no British Government can fail to do it reverence.

WHILE Herr Stresemann was discussing the gloomy German situation in a series of conferences with executives of the various States and municipalities, with leaders of the parties of the coalition, and with industrialists and chiefs of the labour organizations, a delegation of the German Communist party appeared at Moscow to find how the wind was blowing in that quarter. Under the existing circumstances, the Communist doctrine has thriven mightily in Germany. In an atmosphere of drift, the Communist brethren at least give the appearance of having a definite programme, and their idea of telling both the foreign indemnity-robbers and the domestic industrial masters to go to the devil has had an increasing appeal. Many of the leaders believe that the revolution has now been handed to them on a silver platter, and they are not minded to waste their pressing opportunity. With them they have masses of hungry men and the psychology of desperation, and they face a Government without plan, without hope, virtually without arms.

YET Moscow seems to hold back. It is apparent that those stern revolutionists in the Russian Government view the German situation with no little embarrassment. Karl Radek, official high propagandist of Bolshevism, has been emitting a series of articles and speeches urging the German comrades to use discretion. They are a young party, he tells them, and they are confronted with the best-organized bourgeoisie in the world. Perhaps it would be well to wait until they have tripled their numbers and have a million dues-paying members before they attempt to establish a new order. Caution is good strategy, and too-precipitate action would ruin all. In this wise Comrade Radek, Bolshevik fire-eater extraordinary, delivers himself for the benefit of German hot-heads. Doubtless the leaders at Moscow are all for a German proletarian revolution "in principle," but they are fearful of hazarding their task of transforming Russia into a prosperous going-concern in this capitalist world. After all, they are trustees for the largest patch of property on the map. They are no longer in a position where, in case of some cataclysmic disturbance, they have nothing to lose but their chains. Perhaps the German visitors in Moscow are up against a psychological demonstration of the old Marxian doctrine of economic determinism.

In the present crisis the German monarchists, like Br'er Rabbit, are lying low, and it is reported that they are waiting for the Communists to move. It is curious to think of these proud Fee-fo-fums bowing to the leaders of the *Lumpenkerls* and saying, "After you, my dear Alphonse!" but the policy would be a shrewd one. If the monarchists made a revolution out of hand, M. Poincaré's bayonets and his aerial navy would probably leave very little of them or of the *Reich*. If the Communists

moved first, Hindenburg and the Old Gang could pose as the only bulwarks of law and order, and they have reason to suspect that before long the frightened politicians of the Entente would be sending in armies to assist in setting up a "strong" Government as the only hope of keeping Germany safe for the established order. In Russia, it is true, the Allied politicians failed in their attempts at a restoration, but Germany is less remote and less bafflingly spacious. Probably the venture would be horribly costly for the German people, for the Allied Jobs do not serve God for naught; but in any event the monarchists would emerge with control over an appreciable residue of lives, property and territory, and that would be better than their present state of complete dispossession.

WHILE Herr Stresemann labours to stave off political dissolution, the Socialist Minister of Finance, Herr Hilferding, juggles with schemes for producing some sort of *Ersatz* currency which will have some value, in place of the worthless paper mark. Herr Hilferding's task is monumental, for when industrial paralysis has come in at the door, the value of the current medium of exchange slips out at the window. Herr Hilferding apparently has his mind firmly fixed on a capital levy, which, in the present state of German business, may or may not yield something besides bankruptcies; and he is debating plans for backing the new paper with such matters as grain values, in lieu of gold. His programme is elaborate, and seems to call for the exercise of powers that would test a Government of the highest prestige. Should he succeed under the present unfavourable auspices, he will deserve to be rated as a financial magician of rare virtue; but it is scarcely to be supposed that the Government—assuming that it is not snuffed out—will have sufficient authority to enforce his far-reaching measures, even if it dares to adopt them on paper.

THE debacle of the German mark has had so large a place in the news that the struggles of other peoples with their depreciated currencies have been somewhat crowded aside. A correspondent of the Paris *Temps*, writing at the end of August, has some striking things to say about the monetary situation in Hungary. Three months ago, a thousand-crown Hungarian note was of some consequence: to-day it will not pay a cab-fare, for the taximeter now automatically registers a 1500 per cent increase of the normal fare instead of a former 350 per cent. A tramway-ride which cost, three months ago, 80 crowns now costs 600, with the result that the trams, which formerly were crowded to repletion, are now practically empty. A kilo of black bread costs 900 crowns, a kilo of pork 12,000 crowns, a litre of milk 860 crowns, an egg 320 crowns, a kilo of potatoes 260 crowns. Only the well-to-do can afford meat at 10,000 to 12,000 crowns a kilo. The Government, meantime, keeps on printing paper-money: to a circulation of 226,284,576,000 crowns in July it added more than 74,000,000,000 in the last two weeks of August. The financial situation in general, the *Temps* correspondent points out, is just about what the financial situation in Austria was a year ago, before the League of Nations induced some of the Powers to give their separate guarantees of a loan for which, judging from the reported speeches in the Assembly of the League, the League itself is enthusiastically claiming all the credit.

THE time is long past since the opinions of Mr. Newton D. Baker carried any significance. Yet here is Mr. Baker back from Europe, and getting half a column in our deflated metropolitan newspapers to tell how the League of Nations saved civilization in the recent crisis by crawl-



ing up the alley and stuffing its ears. "The League can not die," declared Mr. Baker, quite in the old Wilsonian vein. "It is for the truth, and truth will prevail." How the fine statesmanlike habit of blurting forth pure hokum does cling to a fellow, even after his political barque has moved down the Styx! Mr. Baker, of course, had no hope of running for office; but Senator Underwood has bent his head for the political lightning, and inasmuch as he is a shrewd politician his utterances are trimmed to the winds. In Chicago he was quoted in an idle moment as stating that recent events had written "finis" upon the League. This he has denied, but he now states emphatically that the League is no longer an issue; we are out of it and there's the end. Such words from a pillar of Democratic orthodoxy are worth noting, for they indicate that even the faithfulest of the faithful no longer yield homage to the Wilsonian spell. In his interview Mr. Underwood rashly added that he was all for "saving Europe," but when pressed for specifications his only plan was for placing an American on the Reparations Commission! Apparently the Republican fowlers need not worry about his gamebag.

In a recent issue of the London *Outlook*, the editor delivers himself of some acute remarks upon a condition of affairs that affects the quality of the news published both in this country and in England. Time was, says the *Outlook*, when the journalist considered it his business to collect information in a way that would not interfere with publishing all that he knew; but even before the war there were the beginnings of the institution which the *Outlook* calls the "press levee." Journalists were called together and taken into the confidence of officialdom, and presently they began to feel it their duty, not so much to discover additional facts as to hold back, for reasons of policy, a part of what had been made known to them.

THE effect of all this appears clearly enough in the dispatches that come to American papers from the foreign capitals, and more especially in the news from Washington. The correspondents seem to represent the officials, rather than the press and the people. They are "in the know"; they meet in little informal gatherings with bureau-chiefs, with cabinet-members, with premiers and presidents, and the language of the dispatches shows that the reporters feel themselves always in danger of committing some breach of confidence; "it is rumoured," "it is stated in well-informed circles," "a personage high in authority has intimated," and so on and so on, with no substantial foundation of responsibility and no solid structure of fact. "The serious journalist is no longer a collector of news and an expounder of views for the people," says the *Outlook*. "He is an ambassador abroad and a statesman at home"; in other words, a full partner in the political shell-game.

ON occasion, when the throne of Mr. Samuel Gompers has seemed to be tottering, he has come forth with the effective discovery of a Great Red Plot involving his opponents and critics. These periodical revelations get a booming press, and simple-minded citizens are left with the impression of a venerable and heroic champion contending with the hirelings of Moscow for the leadership of American labour. Mr. John J. Lewis, the head of the mine-workers' organization, who has been suffering some embarrassing rivalry from more progressive spirits in his organization, has now taken a leaf out of Mr. Gompers's book. He recently furnished our credulous newspapers with a whole series of melodramatic yarns to the effect that Lenin and his confederates are seeking to get control of the miners' union, and from

this point of vantage to swallow the whole A. F. of L., lock, stock and barrel, to capture the State Governments, one after another, and finally to take charge in Washington. Mr. W. Z. Foster is the heavy villain in this melodrama, with the American Civil Liberties Union and similar organizations doing the politer work of propaganda. This sort of stuff has worn mighty shabby in the course of service, and deserves no serious attention.

THE Rt. Rev. Henry St. George Tucker, Protestant Episcopal Missionary Bishop of Japan, is reported to have told a congregation at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, in this city, the other Sunday, that the prompt rebuilding of the churches, schools, hospitals and other properties which have been destroyed in Japan would do a good deal to commend Christianity in that country. This sets us thinking. Far be it from us to question the right of any religious body to propagate its faith wherever it can get a chance, or to deny that such action as Bishop Tucker urges might be taken to mean that the sect was really in earnest, notwithstanding that recurring financial deficits on missionary account seem to squint in the other direction. But exactly where does the "missionary" element come in with hospitals and schools? Are we to understand that the medical institutions which the Protestant Episcopal body has been maintaining in Japan mix religion, and denominational religion at that, with medicine, surgery and trained nursing? If they do, then they are doing something which the better class of medical institutions in this country pretty carefully avoid; but if they do not, why class such undertakings as "missionary" enterprises? The same query arises over the schools. Are the schools in Japan which the Bishop wants to see rebuilt at once frankly combining religious teaching of a particular kind with secular teaching of a general kind, as Roman Catholic schools and colleges do everywhere? As far as we can see, they have a perfect right to do so; but if they do not do so, as we had supposed was professedly the case, what is there that is "missionary" about them?

It would be interesting to see what would happen if the Protestant churches were to stand off Bishop Tucker's appeal until an account of stock was taken of this whole missionary business. The dismal financial showing which most of the missionary societies make, year after year, does not seem to indicate any high degree of interest on the part of any of the churches in spreading Christianity in foreign parts. The financial side is the minor one, however. Do we really want to keep on with foreign missions? The intelligent world knows a good deal more about "heathen" religions than it did a generation or two ago, and, fortunately or unfortunately, it knows a good deal more about Christianity and the ethical standards of Christian peoples. We would like very much to see the American churches hold on to their pocketbooks until the whole question has been threshed out; then, if they want to go on with about the most expensive form of propaganda that has yet been devised for times of peace, they can go ahead with their eyes open.

*The editors can not be responsible for manuscripts submitted, but if return postage be enclosed, they will do all in their power to see that rejected manuscripts are returned promptly.*

*It is not to be understood that articles signed with a name, pseudonym, or initials necessarily agree with the opinion of the editors, either in substance or style. They are printed because, in the editors' judgment, they are intrinsically worth reading.*

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## TOPICS OF THE TIME.

### VULGAR REFLECTIONS.

THE cliff-dwellers of New York awoke, some mornings ago, to find themselves bereft of the advertising broadsheets which they are accustomed to assimilate with the matutinal coffee. The pressmen in the newspaper-offices had declared a strike, and for twenty-four hours the inhabitants of the city were virtually without journalistic consolation save such as could be provided by the labour daily, the *Call*, by the foreign-language press, and by such papers from near-by cities as found their way to the stands.

On the second day *The Combined New York Newspapers* began to appear, an eight-page hybrid bearing on its masthead the names of all the principal dailies. This composite product was turned out independently in three or four news-shops each morning and evening. In the first copy we saw, the editorial section consisted of a single paragraph deploring the hardship which, in the writer's opinion, the unexpected walkout had brought upon the public. If hardship there were, it may be said that the public bore it with gallant equanimity. The most common expression of suffering was, "Isn't this a relief?"

The composite newspaper was in itself highly educational for the metropolitan consumers. The attenuated volume necessitated severe restrictions and a total obliteration of non-essentials. The editorial page vanished into thin air, and with it went the sections devoted to syndicated hysteria and feuilletons revolving around the use of toilet-preparations and canned-foods. The financial news appeared in skeletonized form, and even the sporting-pages confined themselves to a brief chronicle of events, stripped of the usual verbose hero-worship. Most noteworthy of all, the advertising, the very vitals of the press, had, save for the theatrical announcements, disappeared almost altogether.

Being under no compulsion to serve as ballyhoo-men for merchandisable wares, the captains of the news permitted their columns to assume an unusual dignity. Political mendacities of the more ambitious sort were conspicuously absent. The more violent phenomena of life in what is called civilized society were treated (so it seemed to us) with marked repression, and even the current murder-trial, involving a prosperous baker, appeared in subdued form. No fresh Russian horrors under a Riga date-line scented the front page. Vital news was presented without the usual dressing of propaganda and irrelevant detail. The result was a refreshing change, and not a few citizens were impressed by the fact that, in the main, they were getting a better newspaper in eight pages than they commonly received in forty.

As we perused these decorous journalistic stopgaps we recalled that legend of the folk-lore of the profession, according to which Charles A. Dana said: "If a dog bites a man, that is not news; if a man bites a dog, that is news." It has seemed on occasion that the application of this shabby saga, combined with the exigencies of the business offices, has gone far to warp the newspaper from its proper function. The men who furbish up the news are commonly so obsessed with the idea of discovering such things as men who bite dogs, that a glance at one's newspaper often convinces one that all civilization is composed of persons commonly engaged in biting at one another. Thus at morn and dewy eve we are served with an infinitude of romantic criminality of the coarser sort. Conspicuous violence is examined and re-examined in meticulous detail, and the most elabo-

rate efforts are made to get to the heart of the matter. On the other hand, the devious trickeries of bankers or politicians are commonly accepted at once at face value, and thus we have column upon column of portentous humbug about consortiums, leagues of nations, world-courts and the like, each one presented as a sort of hospitable Old Wardle, intent on offering refreshment and wholesome entertainment for man, child and beast.

The man-bites-dog rule of editorship makes no provision for the man who bites into or is bitten by an idea. Orthodox journalists are obviously puzzled and annoyed by interlopers of this character, and they seem to act on the theory that the safest plan is to give such fellows a short shrift ("Saviour Dies on Tree," "Self-Styled Philosopher Must Drink Hemlock," "Galileo Jailed: Experts Show Faith Does Not Move"). When a man, driven by desperation or altruism, attempts to bite privilege, that is not news except in so far as the incident may be made to serve for a reassertion of the divine right of monopoly. When privilege bites any group of men, or even a community or a nation, that is not news in any realistic sense ("Men Demand 12-Hour Day, Says Steel Head," "Bishop Calls 5-Cent Trolley Fare Red Plot," "Austria Saved by Robbing Peter").

In these vulgar philosophical reflections we do not wish to convey any harsh criticism of the journalistic personnel. We are aware that our newspapers are not operating in Utopia, but under a system of society wherein things are not always what they seem. We realize that the most successful newspaper is not the most successful news-medium, but the most successful advertising-medium; and once we accept that fact, it is clear that the men who make the press yield a high measure of loyalty and devotion to the standards which conditions impose upon them.

For a brief period, during the strike, we seemed to catch a glimpse of a better order of journalism. Perhaps this was due only to certain virtues of omission in the brief pages; perhaps we suffered from an illusion. However that may be, we found ourselves reading the slender, eight-page news-bulletins of the strike-period with a growing tenderness; and they awakened in us, as they doubtless did in many citizens, vague longings for a newspaper such as is not likely to be printed in this go-getting metropolis of the western world, a newspaper that is not made with "hands."

### WHY FARMING DOES NOT PAY.

THE Washington correspondent of the Baltimore *Sun* calls attention to a remarkable report just issued by the Department of Agriculture on the cost of producing heavy crops (wheat, corn and oats) in 1922. The Department made a survey of 4000 representative farms in all parts of the country, and found that the rent of land averages nearly one-fourth of the total cost of production. In the case of wheat, for instance, the cost of land came to twenty-five per cent of the total, and amounted to more than half of all the labour-costs expended upon the crop. As one result of this, the *Sun* points out that the cost of producing last year's wheat-crop was twelve cents a bushel more than the average price that the farmer got for his wheat; and it remarks further that "economists who have studied the relation of increasing land-values to farm-industry will find in the Department's statement a verification of their contention that the only way the American farmer can make any money is by selling his farm and going out of the farming business." Pre-



cisely so; in other words, as this paper has often stated, farming in America is not a business, but a speculation in land-values.

It seems to us that the publication of this document was a mighty courageous thing for the Department of Agriculture to do. It has done the same thing before, as our readers may remember, but this report gives evidence of a settled policy of really finding out what ails agriculture, and why. For instance, the Department made an estimate of farm-incomes earlier in the year, based on reports from 6000 average farms; and it showed that after deducting the rent on the value of their land, the reward which the farmer and his family got for their labour came to the munificent average of \$97 for the year. According to the *Sun*, too, the Department's officials state their belief that most of the two million people—what an astounding number!—who left the farms last year, were those who found it impossible to earn rent on their land-values and at the same time make a living. They assert, moreover, that the only reason why many more than two million did not leave the farms was that they could not sell out for enough to return their investment. The *Sun*, in its excellent analysis of the report, observes in this connexion:

It has been repeatedly pointed out by economists that land-values are a much more inflexible factor in production-costs than any other item. Once increased, either by a few years of high prices, such as occurred during the war, or by speculative buying and selling, which has been going on since the settlement of the country, it is difficult to bring them down.

Although the real values are fixed by the income, the owners decline to forget the prices they paid by writing down the valuations, but seek of necessity to gain a six or seven per cent on their return investment. Of course, the farmer always has the alternative of figuring his income as six or seven per cent on his land-cost and cutting it out of his labour-return, or crediting his income to wages and finding returns on his land little or nothing. But neither method makes him anything but a loser under the prices received last year.

We offer the Department of Agriculture and the Baltimore *Sun* our sincere and grateful felicitations. If they keep up this kind of thing much longer, they will have us believing that governmental bureaux and newspapers may be of some use, after all. If this paper has been profoundly sceptical, as it has been and still is, of all those persons in public life who are sweating blood over the woes of the farmer, it is because they invariably have nothing to say about the one primary cause of those woes, namely: the private ownership of economic rent. It is for this reason that we never took a penny's worth of stock in the programme of the Non-partisan League, and refrained from throwing our hat in the air over the political triumph, good enough in a negative way, of Mr. Magnus Johnson. It is a commonplace of science that an attempt at eradicating malaria must begin with the mosquito. It is likewise and equally a commonplace of science that an attempt to restore agriculture to the status of an industry must begin with land-values. Attempts which do not begin with land-values are sheer quackery, on the Department's own showing, and those who promote them are sheer quacks; they are untrustworthy and pestilent pretenders. In support of this view, we earnestly invite general attention to the Department's report. So far, we have not noticed any great amount of comment on it, and we should like to see some; in particular, we should like to know what the "agricultural bloc" at Washington and the agricultural trade-papers of the country can find to say about it.

## IF WE WENT IN.

Most persons who insist that the United States ought to do something to straighten out the disorders of Europe would probably be willing to admit that, unless the United States is to go the length of calling for a sweeping review of the whole international situation, from the peace-conference to date, it would have to take sides with one or another of the principal disturbers. It could not take sides with all of them, or with any considerable number of them, because no two of them are entirely agreed concerning what they want. This much being premised, upon which of the Powers must the choice of a partner fall? Obviously, the United States would have to take the part of France. You may admire M. Poincaré and his political and industrial entourage, or you may detest both him and them; neither opinion makes any difference so far as the course open to the United States is concerned. M. Poincaré is altogether too outstanding a figure at the present time to be either passed over entirely or to have any other chief of state preferred before him. Moreover, he has already several times announced, in his series of Sunday discourses which the British vainly strive to dispose of as sermons to the dead, not only that he does not intend to alter his programme regarding Germany, but that there is no power on earth that can make him change it. Incidentally, be it remembered, he has at his disposal a standing army of several hundred thousand men, excellently equipped, and the largest aeroplane-force in the world. Evidently, then, if the United States is to take sides in the European imbroglio, it must take sides with France. The only alternative, if it takes sides with any other Government, is to have its intervention repulsed by the gentleman who holds the key to the situation; or, if intervention is still pressed, the possibility of a diplomatic rupture and perhaps a war. You can not get away from it: either march with M. Poincaré, or go in for a trial of strength. As we have no reason to believe that the Washington Administration will let itself be wheedled into intervention with the certainty of a breach with France before its eyes, it is clear that intervention, if it came, would have to begin by taking sides with M. Poincaré.

What, precisely, does that mean? It means, in the first place, the approval of M. Poincaré's contention that he has a right to interpret the treaty of Versailles for himself, and of his policy of sending French troops, tanks and aeroplanes into the Ruhr. To be sure, the legality of what has been done has been vigorously attacked both in this country and in England; but the question is not open for debate, because M. Poincaré has already answered the objection to his own satisfaction in his discussions with Mr. Baldwin, and M. Poincaré does not change. American intervention on the side of France, then, would involve agreement with the French Premier in his claim of a right to act alone. But it would go farther than that: the things which the French have done in the Ruhr would also, by implication, have to be accepted without dissent. On this point the Germans have lately issued a semi-official statement which our interventionists would do well to ponder. Down to 14 September, twelve persons have been killed, and ten have been sentenced to death by courts-martial. Five persons have been sentenced to imprisonment for life, and imprisonment aggregating 1500 years has been imposed upon others. 173 newspapers have been suspended, and 145,000 persons have been driven from their homes. The seizures of marks are represented by the imposing figure 1,652,111,000,000,000, or 1652 million million. This looks a little



severe for peaceful occupation, but it must all be accepted, practically as well as by implication, for M. Poincaré will not allow any of his performances to be questioned. You can not pick and choose. Love me, love my dog.

This is not all, however. M. Poincaré has taken pains to declare himself with great precision on the subjects of reparations and war-debts. He insists upon having 26,000,000,000 gold marks, and not a pfennig less, to pay for reconstruction, and his proper share of anything over and above that amount that may be extracted from Germany on account of the debts. If any figures less than these are proposed, the proposal will go into the waste-basket. Further, he will not allow the question of reparations to be tied to the question of the debts, as Mussolini would like to do, and he has bluntly given notice that not a franc will be paid on the debts until the reparations-account is settled. This may seem a bit peremptory, but there it is: take it or leave it. If you take it, you are playing M. Poincaré's game; if you leave it, you are playing his game equally well; but if you dissent, and insist upon dissenting, he will tell you, politely but firmly, to go your way and let his business alone. It is the same situation all along the line. M. Poincaré will not evacuate the Ruhr until he gets his money or some gilt-edged pledges; he will not tolerate the idea of a special international commission to supersede the Reparations Commission over which his faithful friend M. Barthou presides; he has repulsed the suggestion of referring the question of reparations to the League of Nations. On all of these points he has long since made up his mind, and anybody who ventures to approach him with the suggestion of a settlement will have to begin by conceding all his claims.

These are the unvarnished facts of the situation. Who wants the United States to "go in" on such terms? Some thick-and-thin partisans of "bleeding France" probably do; and there are doubtless some noisy chatterers who are so obsessed by the might, majesty, dominion, power and glory of America as really to imagine that, if Washington would but speak, M. Poincaré would fall humbly and gratefully on his knees. The only thing that would bring so much as a favouring glance from M. Poincaré is for the United States to announce its unquestioning acceptance of his entire programme; for that, we may be sure, he would pen a commemorative speech that would make the welkin ring. Anything else would only provoke another of the snubs that he knows very well how to administer to people who cross him; after which, unless the Administration wanted a genuine row, American intervention would fade out of the picture.

### PROPAGANDA AT WORK.

SOME of our readers may have noticed in the New York *Times* of 31 August an advertisement in the financial section inviting subscriptions, at \$150 per year postpaid, to the daily letters or bulletins of the Société d'Etudes et d'Informations Economiques of Paris. Over fifty sheets daily, contributed by "the foremost European writers," among them M. Emile Mir-eaux, M. Augustin Leger, M. Jacques Bardoux, and M. André-François Poncet are promised. The publication is described as "the most unique periodical of its kind published daily in French," and it not only furnishes "a comprehensive survey of all economic subjects of world-interest, supplemented by significant press opinions," but also treats "in an exhaustive manner the most vital phases of finance, law, production, trade, labour, transportation, and public utilities."

We do not transcribe the foregoing statements for the sake of criticizing them. The publication is all that it claims to be, and more. We are not intimately familiar with every one of the numerous information-services which collect statistical and other data for the use of business men and editors; but if there is in any country, and particularly in the United States, a service superior to that of the Société d'Etudes et d'Informations Economiques, we do not know of it. The subscription price is high, but for anyone who wants to keep track day by day of certain important things that are going on in Europe, the bulletins are cheap for the money.

Behind this advertisement, however, lies a bit of history. What is the Société d'Etudes et d'Informations Economiques? Any visitor to Paris who will take the trouble to go upstairs at No. 282 Boulevard St. Germain, not far from the Chamber of Deputies, will find himself ushered into an elaborate suite of offices, handsomely furnished, equipped with practically every facility of books, charts, file-cases, and other material for statistical research, and presided over by a courteous gentleman who, in the characteristic French way, appears to have nothing else to do than to answer questions, if inquiry is not pushed too far. Who supports this remarkable organization, and what does it do?

The Société d'Etudes is the information- and propaganda-service of the great associations of French manufacturers and other business interests, chief among which is the powerful association of French metallurgical industries known as the Comité des Forges. Let no one think that the Comité des Forges and its associated organizations are concerned only with business; they are very vitally concerned with politics also, and their activities are to be traced throughout France in the incessant conflicts between labour and capital, and in the bitter strife between political radicalism and political reaction. It is the Comité des Forges that is openly charged, in other than labour quarters as well as by the labour syndicates, with having inspired the French occupation of the Ruhr. The persistent efforts of the French coal, coke, iron and steel interests to obtain control of the corresponding interests in the Ruhr, as well as throughout the occupied territory of Germany along the Rhine, are not matters of conjecture, but of history. Of the political reach of these efforts the advertisement in the *Times* gives, as it happens, an illustration worth pondering. One of the writers whom the Société d'Etudes exploits is M. André-François Poncet, "whose prophetic survey of the trend of German thought prior to the war startled all Europe." We do not recall M. Poncet's "prophetic survey," but we were interested to observe that just about the time when the advertisement in the *Times* appeared, M. Poncet turned up in the Ruhr as the spokesman for the Comité des Forges in the negotiations which were going on between the French industrialists and the Stinnes, Krupp and other German interests, and which the Stresemann Government appears to be favouring. As a contributor to the daily bulletins of the Société d'Etudes, M. Poncet will not only be in a position to speak by the card, as he always has been, but we can also forecast pretty accurately what he will say.

The Société d'Etudes is now apparently angling for America. Anyone who subscribes to its news-letter will get his money's worth of information, but he will also get the French official point of view, skilfully presented and subtly rubbed in, regarding the whole question of the economic and political relations of France and Germany. He will be afforded a vast amount of



information, but it will be information assembled by and for "big business"; and since the information which the American press, trade-journals included, gives about economic conditions in Europe is food for babes in comparison with that which the Société d'Etudes puts out every day, the Comité des Forges may hopefully anticipate converts to its large and comprehensive point of view of how best to settle the present discontents. France wants the sympathy of American business—wants it very much, in fact. What surer way is there to get it, in the long run, than to inoculate the prosperous American business man, to whom \$150 a year is only a bagatelle, with the same ideas of capitalist rule with which the Comité des Forges and its associates have been comprehensively inoculating France? We suggest that our readers will do well to watch their favourite newspapers with special attention for the next few months, to see whether the inoculation has "taken." If it has, the French, who have been complaining a good deal of late that their Government's propaganda in this country has been money thrown away, may find their hope of winning American business opinion to their side appreciably revived by this strictly private agency.

### MISCELLANY.

SEEING Mr. Cyril Maude in his excellent new comedy, "Aren't We All?" gives one a hint of the distance that we have already gone towards civilizing our conception of marriage. The play is most happily devoid of "moral purpose," but I have not seen anything in years which brings about a better *rapprochement* between the moral sense of an audience and that of a playwright. By far the most interesting feature of the evening is the quick and intelligent response of the audience to certain lines which in the bad old days of my youth—Mrs. Wharton's "age of innocence"—would, I am sure, have been received in pensive and embittered silence. The moral of the play—for though it is free from any pestiferous moralities, it has a moral, and a sound one—is that the best insurance of happiness in such a delicate and difficult relation as marriage, is freedom. Even this the audience caught and approved at once, which I thought quite remarkable because it has long seemed to me that any such thing as faith in freedom had long ago disappeared from among us.

OF all things that human beings fear (and they are a timorous race) the one that strikes them with abject and utterly demoralizing terror is freedom. They are so afraid of it for other people that almost simultaneously they come to dread it for themselves. So they devise systems of checks and balances, restraints, moral sanctions, conventions and moral mass-expectations of one kind and another; they are willing to go to the most fantastic lengths in restriction and repression; but the one thing that they never yet have shown the courage to try is simple freedom, which some day they will have the happy surprise of discovering to be the only thing that really works. Pending this general discovery, each person can, in a much larger way than he thinks possible, discover it for himself, and thereby put himself in the way of a great deal of solid satisfaction and happiness. If one puts no expectation whatever, of any kind, upon any person, no matter how intimate one's association with him, the returns that one gets are marvellous. This does not mean making no demands upon him, but really, in one's inmost heart, not expecting anything of him, not *wishing* to make any demands upon him. Few are able to do this, fewer still are wise enough to wish to do it, and almost no one dares do it.

THESE considerations of course go far beyond their application to the very special and limited question of "how to be happy though married," which is the basis of Mr. Maude's new play. They apply to all relations of life, collective as well as individual, public as well as private. One of the things that will interest the historian of civilization in the United States is the progress of the principle of liberty since the Colonial period, to show what its actual practical applications have been, what their limitations were, and how the popular understanding and acceptance of the doctrine itself have become modified in consequence. But all this is a long way from Mr. Maude's comedy, which shows merely that liberty—not a formal and factitious liberty, but liberty *ex animo*—is the indispensable condition of successful and happy love. The whole philosophy of success in this delicate and easily-marred relation was put strikingly in the remark of Philina to Wilhelm in Goethe's novel, "If I love you, what business is that of yours?"

THE very advantages which American women enjoy, which lead foreigners to say we spoil them, really work against their interests where companionship with men is concerned, whether in marriage or out of it. The American girl has, relatively, a pretty wide range of experience and cultivation, and she has unusual opportunities for developing what cleverness she has, so that she rather tends to outstrip her male associates. If she picks the exceptional man for companionship, she finds him hard to live with, as such men notoriously are; if she picks the commonplace man, who is the most amiable soul on earth to live with, and who pampers her shockingly, she finds him really, in the long run, pretty dull. Adjustment either way is therefore much harder for her than for her European sisters. While Englishmen and Europeans are always very keen to tell us how badly the American woman has been brought up, I notice that they get mightily interested in her in very short order, and that they remain interested as long as she is around.

AMERICAN life is a little easier on a young woman's willingness to become civilized than it is on a young man's. It may not be said to encourage her intellectual curiosity and her aspirations after culture, but it does not, perhaps, so expressly and truculently discourage them. Hence one may put it broadly that there are not enough relatively first-rate men to go around among the relatively first-rate women. This has a bearing, insufficiently recognized, upon divorce, and upon the alienations and miserable misunderstandings that beset the maintenance of an arbitrary monogamy. Some one has said (I think it was Mr. George Shaw, though I may be unconsciously slandering him) that a first-rate woman would rather have a part-interest in a first-rate man than all of a second-rate man. This is quite natural, too, for men as for women, I think; that is, when they have come to the time, as Mr. Maude says in his comedy, "when humour takes the place of jealousy and when tolerance takes the place of indignation."

THE stoppage of the newspapers puts me in mind again of the odd neurasthenic people who seem to live in fear of what they call the "collapse of civilization," if, for instance, the League of Nations dies of inanition or some conference of pitiful rascals breaks down in disagreement over political trades and deals. I wonder what they mean by that. Do they not mean having fewer newspapers, motor-cars, trains, telephones, banks, finance-companies, domestic servants, and the like? In Europe I have seen "civilization," in this point of view, on the verge of collapse for a long time now, and I can not feel that mat-



ters would be significantly worse if it collapsed altogether.

THE question is easily tested. Civilization is the progressive humanization of men in society; and this can not be measured by the number of newspapers and the conveniences of transportation and communication. Civilization is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual development. So far only as the abundance of banks, servants, railways and the like conduces to this development, has it any significance for civilization. These things do not necessarily humanize mankind; conceivably, indeed, they may work the other way. My own belief is that if they all tumbled into chaos, the processes of actual civilization would not miss them half as much as some seem to think. Civilization certainly got on without them for many ages, and in some ages exceedingly well; and I think it might manage to do so again.

SEEING what the self-styled "practical men," the monopolists and politicians, have made of the world, does it ever occur to any one to wonder what the poets and artists might make of it if the débris were turned over to them?

JOURNEYMAN.

## POETRY.

### THE FIGUREHEAD SPEAKS.

I am the figurehead upon your ship.  
With swirl of winds in garments and in hair,  
Mute, steadfast, making there  
My plea for Beauty.

Infinite waves and tempest, terrifying, black,  
Have broken on my breast and fallen back,  
And though the sea has whipped my courage white,  
Face to the gale beneath your sail  
I ride with moon and tide.

You know me there . . . you saw them  
That young day they lashed me in my place  
And we set sail so bright and brave for stranger lands,  
You, who work always with the ropes, the tiller and rude  
sheets.

You know me there, carved like a silent thing  
Upon your prow.

It takes the whole of you to man your ship.  
The work is to the worker, and the lash of toil  
As ruthless as the lashing of the sea.  
The work is to the worker and the skilled,  
And I, deep in my rigid breast, dream on  
And keep the faith.

Is work enough? What of the dream, O Pilot,  
That folds the tender rose of cloud and coral,  
The glory when the sun drops in the sea,  
The emerald and the sapphire and the flame?  
The scent of tar and oakum does not hint  
Of fragrance in sweet gardens of lost isles.  
You know me there, but if the sea,  
The Monster Mighty which we serve should take me,  
How would you know me gone?  
I hear your hurrying feet upon the decks of action,  
And I dream and wait. You can not answer now.

Think you, O Pilot, when the storms are done,  
That we shall sail through friendly, purple dark,  
With lights and bells, to quiet anchorage,  
And wake where silken waters silvery lie  
Bright shimmering in the sun?  
Will you then rest untiring arms  
And swinging down, lean till you see my face  
Back of its tempest-scars?

I shall forget the sting of bitter spray  
Which long has drenched me clean.  
What of the dream, Beloved, what of the dream?

CLARE SHIPMAN.

## EDUCATION IN THE NEW RUSSIA.

### I. THE RABFACS.

"WORKER! Remember that only October opened to you the door of higher education!" This sign appears above the entrance to the Pokrovsky "rabfac," the largest of the eight workers' high schools which have been established all over Russia since the revolution. These "rabfacs," or workers' schools, represent one of the most tangible conquests of the revolution. They are crowded with 30,000 students, drawn directly from the factory and the plough. No one can enter the rabfac unless he is a *bona-fide* worker or peasant, recommended by some proletarian organization. The number of students is increasing by 5000 every year, and the graduates of the rabfacs make up a large and increasing proportion of the students in the universities.

The rabfac gives a three-years course, suited to the needs and preparation of the student. Most of the workers and peasants who enter these institutions elect technical and scientific courses. Many of them will no doubt become the Red specialists of the future, who will relieve Russian industry of one of its greatest present handicaps, the indifference and positive disloyalty of many of the bourgeois experts whom it is now necessary to employ. Biological courses are offered for the benefit of those who wish to train themselves as physicians. A cultural course is also given.

The teaching in the rabfacs has a number of interesting and original features. For instance, courses are not given in the haphazard piecemeal fashion that often characterizes the work of an American high school or college. There is an effort to bring out the points of contact between the different courses. So chemistry and physics are taught as parts of a related whole. Literature is studied from the point of view of the social and historical influences which moulded it. Aristophanes and Shakespeare, Goethe and Turgenev are treated not as individual geniuses but as products, to some extent, of the social and political forms and habits which surrounded them. In one of the rabfac buildings, which also houses part of the Sverdlov University, is an excellently equipped biological laboratory, named after Professor Timiryazev, a famous scientist who died in the early years of the revolution. Timiryazev's memory is held in grateful honour because he showed his sympathy with the workers' cause at a time when the intelligentsia as a class was almost solidly opposing the revolution. The laboratory would no doubt excite the pious horror of Mr. Bryan and the enlightened legislators of Oklahoma and Texas. Its specimens are arranged so as to show the progress from lower to higher organisms, thereby graphically demonstrating the theory of evolution.

Marks and examinations are discarded in the rabfacs. At the end of each term the teacher calls the class together and states his opinion about the ability of each member, giving his reasons why the students deserve to pass or fail. The students participate actively in this process. They give their own impressions about the work of their comrades; and it is on the basis of this joint discussion that the promotion of each student is determined.

No one who has visited rabfac classes could very well fail to be impressed by the earnestness and seriousness of the students. Among these working-class students there is no nonsense about "making" fraternities and getting on football teams; studies are the main thing, and not a disagreeable accompaniment to four years of polite loafing.



Anyone who has visited rabfac courses must be impressed also by the seriousness and attentiveness of the students. One could have heard a pin drop while the lectures were being given. At the same time there is no lack of energy and enthusiasm among the students, as one could see from their prompt answers to general questions and from the warm speeches of welcome which they always make in honour of foreign visitors.

The rabfacs are a growing movement. This year they added 5000 new students. Next year the number will be increased by more than 7000. The goal of 50,000 will be reached in the near future. Thirty per cent of the students at the present time are Communists; the others are non-party workers and peasants. The students are supported partly by the State, partly by the trade union or other organization which sends them to the school. It is hardly necessary to say that very few of these rabfac students would have received even elementary training, to say nothing of high-school education and the chance to enter the universities and higher technical schools, if it had not been for the revolution. Tuition in the universities, as well as in the rabfacs, is free to working-class students.

The rabfacs are perhaps the most important instrument in the systematic conquest of higher education by the Russian workers. History shows that in every form of society higher education has been in the hands of the ruling class. In the Middle Ages, when the power of the Church was almost absolute, education was largely confined to priests and monks. With the rise of the modern bourgeois States, university training became a privilege of the rich. The students at Oxford and Cambridge have always been recruited from "gentlemen's sons." The "gentleman" is, of course, a person who has inherited or acquired a substantial amount of private property. Harvard and Princeton and Yale are filled with sons of business and professional men. The number of working-class students in these institutions is so small as to be almost negligible.

In Russia the proletariat is now the ruling class; and the Russian workers are slowly and painfully, but none the less determinedly, making themselves masters of the great weapons of scientific and cultural education which were formerly denied them. "Bite with your young teeth on the granite of science," said Trotsky at the last congress of the Russian Communist Youth. Trotsky's precept is being carried out to-day by thousands of workers and peasants in the rabfacs and universities.

I once asked one of the workers who was attending rabfac courses whether there was not a danger that these students would become isolated from the proletariat in their interests and sympathies. "No, never," he replied quickly. "Our roots in the working class are so deep that we can never betray it."

I believe that this student was right. The occasional worker who enters a university in a capitalist country is subject to overwhelming bourgeois influences. He is entirely cut off from his class. Almost inevitably he becomes a climber and a careerist. Very different is the case with the Russian rabfacs. Here the whole body of students comes directly from the masses of the people. It is constantly leavened with new recruits coming straight from the mill, the shop or the farm. The ideology which these proletarian students encounter is, of course, strongly collectivist. And so, while here and there an individual may forget himself

and set out to make a personal career, there is every reason to believe that the great majority of the rabfac students will remain loyal citizens of the proletarian republic, and place their knowledge and science at the service of the class from which they spring.

## II. THE SVERDLOV UNIVERSITY.

AN American newspaper that arrived here in Moscow the other day contained a notice of a book by an *émigré* Russian in which the statement was made that large audiences in Russia are attracted only by religious demonstrations. Communist meetings, so the book declared, were scantily attended. After pushing and fighting my way for about half an hour last night through a dense mass of ardent young Communists in order to get into the crowded Zimin Theatre, I came to the conclusion that the learned professor, in characteristic *émigré* fashion, had been allowing the wish to father the thought. For the occasion that attracted thousands of people to the Zimin Theatre was very far from being a religious demonstration. It was the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the Sverdlov University, an institution that may be described as the peak of the system of working-class education that has been built up in Russia since the revolution. It absorbs and trains the most promising candidates from the rabfacs, unions and various party-organizations.

Eighty-five students who had completed the three-years course in Marxist science and general education offered by the University were graduating. The importance attached to the event may be judged by the list of speakers, which included Trotsky, Radek, Lunacharsky and Sapronov, the secretary of the All-Russian Soviet Executive Committee. The speeches were all listened to with the closest attention, varied by prolonged bursts of cheering at the end. At the close of each speech the audience rose, while the orchestra played snatches from the "Internationale."

Trotsky appeared on the stage, dressed in a plain linen suit, and received a tremendous ovation, especially from the Red army soldiers in the audience. He immediately launched into his speech, driving home to the students the duties of the trained revolutionist. No communist, first of all, could possess a trace of religious or nationalist feeling. Marx had justly said that religion is the opium of the people, and there could be no national divisions in the fight for the world-revolution. Marxism was a creed that justified itself only in action. It was the illegal revolutionists, not the parlour-theoreticians, who had proved themselves the true disciples of socialism. Trotsky paid several affectionate tributes to Lenin, whom he ranked with Marx as one of the two greatest figures in social thought. The Sverdlov students could only live up to their highest ideals if they followed Lenin in spirit and in thought. The true revolutionist must not be afraid of force. He recalled the personality of Sverdlov, the dead founder of the University. Sverdlov had firmly believed in the seizure of power by the proletariat.

Trotsky then developed an idea that recurred several times during the evening. The decisive battles of the world-revolution during the next generation must be fought in the East. In these Oriental countries lived enormous masses of people, oppressed and exploited by Western capitalist-imperialism. The forces of revolt were already stirring in countries like India and China. But these Eastern lands lacked a disciplined proletariat, which could serve as a nucleus for the revolutionary movement. Therefore the rôle of the international revolutionary-agitator became all the more important.



"Carry your message of revolutionary education to Asia," cried Trotzky to the Sverdlov graduates.

Radek spoke along the same lines. It was the uncounted millions of the East, long patient slaves of Western imperialism, now already potential rebels, who would turn the tide against international capitalism and finally ensure the victory of the proletariat. Radek also spoke of the effect of Lord Curzon's note, which, sounding like a bell, had awakened the Russian workers to the need for preparedness. Now this bell, with the help of the Sverdlov students, would become a huge gong, resounding throughout Russia and calling the workers to be on guard against the danger of new hostile attacks from without.

Lunacharsky emphasized the unique educational character of the University. It was training an intelligentsia of, by and for the people. The days were gone when men and women from bourgeois and aristocratic families would go out to carry enlightenment to the masses. This was all very well in the days when the Russian workers and peasants had not been awakened. But now, after the revolution, the workers rightly insisted that they should not have knowledge handed down to them, but that they should go out and seize it for themselves. The Sverdlov University was only one of many institutions for the higher education of workers which had been created since the revolution.

When it was first established, in the stormy year of 1918, the Sverdlov University was not equipped to give long courses to its students. At that time it was essentially a training-school for fighters. Groups of young workers were sent to the University, given a few weeks of hasty training and then thrown on one of the many fronts that then existed all over Russia. Many of the Sverdlovtsi (as the University students are called) who went out to fight Kolchak and Denikin, Wrangel and Pilsudski, never returned. But their places were always taken by new recruits, drawn from the flower of the revolutionary working class. Sverdlov University has always remained a thoroughly proletarian institution, in its spirit and in the character of its students. I once attended one of its lectures, delivered by Professor Pokrovsky, the originator of the idea of the rabfacs and one of the few among the old intelligentsia who remained loyal to the people's cause after the revolution. Pokrovsky was discussing the causes which led up to the revolution of 1905, analyzing the social forces behind this movement and the reasons for its failure. The audience that listened to this historical lecture could not be distinguished from the gathering that one would see at a trade-union meeting. It was made up almost entirely of manual workers, sturdy metallists from Petrograd, the shock-troops of the revolution, textile-workers from Moscow and Ivanovo-Vosnessensk, miners from the Donets and the Urals.

It was from these Russian workers that the eighty-five graduates of the Sverdlov University were largely drawn. On the stage with them sat old revolutionists, among whom the white hair and white beard of Leo Deutsch were conspicuous. Behind the stage hung a large portrait of Sverdlov, with his sad, brooding face surmounted by a high Astrakhan cap. The class-background of the Sverdlovtsi is the best guaranty for their loyalty to the cause of the world-revolution. One could see them listening intently to the fiery words of Trotzky and Radek; and one could envisage them as leaders of a coming Eastern revolution that all Lord Curzon's ultimatums will be quite powerless to stop.

A. C. FREEMAN.

## POETRY AND PESSIMISM.

It was once a paradox, and is now a platitude, to say that any subject is fit for poetry. But since a platitude is merely an opinion generally accepted without thought or discussion, the conditions that governed the former paradox are generally neglected. Those conditions are that the chosen subject shall have so profoundly entered into the experience of man that its imaginative treatment will be able to evoke immediate intimate emotions. Therefore, there can not be any new subject for poetry; or rather no new subject is proper to poetry until it has become an old subject by being long brooded over by many contemplative souls.

Spiritual desolation would seem to be—and yet is not—such a subject. Every gifted nature has known that most cruel of agonies; and passionate voices have cried out of the darkness with Homer that man is the saddest of all the beasts of the field, or with David that all flesh is as the withering grass. But such outbursts have been salutary means of ridding the system of its poison; the incurable distress of man has often been eased by a slight blood-letting of blasphemy. Following swiftly upon that blank hour when the poet has troubled deaf heaven with his bootless cries,

The lark, at break of day arising  
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate.

"Beauty," wrote Patmore, "is pleasure visible"; and gloom, or grief, or dejection of mind—by being made beautiful—are transmuted into pleasure. Disillusionment can, indeed, be the matter of poetry; but, having become poetry, it assumes the protean shape of an illusion, which in turn rises, through symbolic fables, into the clear air where shining Truth is revealed.

Poets have, therefore, frequently enough found consolation in bitter beauty, and have sighed with Spenser,

My bread shall be the anguish of my mind,  
My drink the teares that fro my eyes do raine;

and it must be confessed that not one, with the exception of Traherne, has been preoccupied solely with unalloyed joy. But there is no poetry of fixed despair. At worst the poets have but absented themselves from felicity awhile. They return, bringing with them that most sensitive joy which is made poignant by pain.

Joy is what the present age conspicuously lacks. Nevertheless, the age is not to be described as pessimistic: even were we capable of the iron candour of the thorough-going pessimist, the nostalgia of Christian tradition continues to work too powerfully, though secretly, even in the blood of our intellectuals, to permit us to be robbed finally of hope.

We do, however, give ourselves away by our wistful dreams of the possibility of joy. For we all dream of joy; and the poets (with whom I am concerned), ill at ease like the rest, seek it in their own way by creating the exquisite little personal lyrics that are so pathetic a proof of a widespread unhappiness. Yet there are not—neither can there be—any poets of pessimism. John Wesley was unnecessarily alarmed: the Devil has none of the good tunes—only a quantity of jazz!

Yet there are points at which current poetry seems to approach perilously near to pessimism in the eyes of those old-fashioned people who complain that contemporary poets are unfaithful to their proper rôle of consoling and illuminating mankind. Appearances here are false.

To take the lowest case: the pertness of many of our young poets does not always spring from conceit



or disordered nerves: their irritation is merely an imperfectly developed anger. It does not possess the nobility of indignation, but at least it is not so ignoble as it is often thought to be.

Poets who, as I have suggested, sometimes suffer from nerves, suffer also—not less than the dismal world—from fits of the blues. Even the light-hearted seventeenth-century poets were subject to moods of dejection. Drummond of Hawthornden may have been the most highly-strung writer of a robust period, but his heavy groan about slave-born playing to the scoffing stars could be matched many times over in similar verses written by his care-free fellows. But not one of them would have regarded such petulance as anything more than it was; assuredly none would have regarded it as the formulation of a philosophy. In our own neurotic day, Mr. J. C. Squire had the good sense to assure his readers in the preface to one of his books that among the poems it contained were expressions of fugitive moods that the poet did not necessarily think worthy of esteem.

After all, such moods give an edge to what, without them, might be insipidity. If the soul did not undergo dejection there would be nothing for joy to overcome. For dejection is what temptation is to the saint: an opportunity for the exercise of virtue.

Moreover, virtue has no more virile exercise than in anger. Who shall deny that an angry man—however disastrous his rage—is happy, or that poetry is healthy in anger? Had Mr. A. E. Housman made anyone except his pet blackguard rail against

Whatever brute or blackguard made the world—the sentiment, though erroneous, would not have been without dignity, nor perhaps unacceptable to the ironic humour of Paradise. Had Omar not been a hedonist, his absolution

For all the sin whereby the face of man  
Is blackened, man's forgiveness give—and take,

might have been more stinging, because more in accord with divine justice. But though neither Omar nor Housman is hopeful enough to be really angry, they have some sort of a hope—or they would not take the trouble to complain. If the world is evil without possibility of amendment, there is nothing more to be said about it. And all songs cease.

The whole point of the aspiration of the spirit is that there is good behind the veil. The rebellion against the existence of evil and pain, though it result in a denunciation of God, is, rightly considered, a left-handed proof of the existence of God. Gazing upon an inexplicably evil world, we storm against heaven, perhaps deny heaven; but our very anger is a querulous demand for heaven. The atheist finds the necessity of inventing a God to curse.

Much less admirable than this misdirected indignation is the common pose of insincere cynicism. When Miss Millay remarks,

Life must go on;  
I forget just why,

we may be certain that she learnt the sentiment from books, not from life. What could be more factitious than the poetic pessimism of Swinburne?

For the crown of our life as it closes  
Is darkness, the fruit thereof dust;  
No thorns go as deep as a rose's,  
And love is more cruel than lust.  
Time turns the old days to derision,  
Our loves into corpses or wives;  
And marriage and death and division  
Make barren our lives.

Could anything be more evidently strained? Who was ever stirred in the reading of it except callow boys? Who would not know that it was written by a confirmed bachelor?

The test of poetry written out of suffering or sorrow is its effect: does it give peace? We come from the witnessing of great tragedy with minds exalted, not depressed. If in some modern tragedies (in Mr. Eugene O'Neill's extraordinary plays, for instance) the supreme end of tragedy is rarely reached, it is because the catharsis is incomplete. Beauty is unachieved; that tragic beauty which, like all beauty, is a vision of God. For the poet has been unable to say with the mystic: "Though I make my bed in hell, thou art there."

This incompleteness is the main disease of so much modern writing. Our novelists are not, as they believe, dealing courageously with themes that the past has been afraid to tackle; but for the first time they allow those themes to remain sordid, mean and untransfigured. Their case is stated only partially, and is not referred back to the universal where calm acceptance waits. They are blind to all save the shattered thing, the instant of loss. As a poet, the last of all the moderns to be accused of pessimism, allowed a despairing pagan to say:

The barest branch is beautiful,  
One moment, while it breaks.

Our elders were haunted by thoughts of the grave; yet we must admit that their musings upon death were gayer than our musings upon life. Their weeping was merrier than our rejoicing, because they did not take their gloom too seriously. "Our tears," they said,

Our tears we'll send a speedier way,  
The tide shall bring them twice a day—  
With a fa, la, la, la, la, la.

But that was in a time when full-blooded, rosy-cheeked, well-fed, three-bottle men begged Melancholy to be so kind as to oblige them by marking them to be her own. It would be better for us if we could pass off our bitterness with a fa, la, la, la, la, la.

But it would be still better if we regained that motive force of all excellent art, the valiance of hope, and could be brought to understand that poetry, in its attempt to lighten life, to make life "more abundant," is a department of religion. The poet, the lover, and the saint can not touch what they securely grasp during mortality, and grow by means of impossible longing. Each has, though in varying forms, his unsustainable moment of rapture, his hint of glory, his taste of the ineffable. Each was a prophet of hope before he became an adept in joy.

Impermanence discloses its meaning to them, for they behold what can not pass away. They are moved to attain the unattainable, and clasp the promise of immortality. For if the lost fall eternally through the abyss, from pit to lower pit, for ever dying and never dead, with the vital principle dwindling and inexhaustible, life's visionaries will rise from height to height of ecstatic life, saturated with increasing bliss, experiencing in every eternal instant infinite satisfaction fused with infinite desire, embraced by God and yet unconsumed.

THEODORE MAYNARD.

## THE FARMERS AND THE TARIFF.

IN order that the urban population of the United States may understand the attitude of the farmers towards the question of tariffs, it is necessary briefly to review the history of tariff-legislation during the past fifteen years. For more than forty years previous to the



Presidential election of 1908, the protective system prevailed; the slight reductions in customs-duties made by the Wilson tariff-law, 1894-1897, had not materially changed the established order. When, owing to the disastrous split in the Democratic party (traditionally favourable to low tariff-rates), through the raising of the issue of "free silver," the Republican party returned to power in 1897, Congress enacted the Dingley law, which imposed rates in many cases higher than those imposed by the McKinley act of 1890. Following the adoption of the Dingley act, the increased cost of many manufactured articles consumed by the farmers was attributed to the higher duties, and resulted in vigorous protests throughout the farming regions—particularly in the Western and North-western States—against what was alleged to be favouritism to the manufacturing interests. During Roosevelt's administration, the growing demand for lower duties was ignored; but the Republican National Convention of 1908 recognized the popular sentiment by declaring for a policy of "tariff-revision," which was understood to mean a revision downwards of the schedules against which the loudest protests had been made. In former discussions on the tariff, the question of protective duties on farm-products was seldom referred to; it was assumed that the farmer's chief interest was in the building up of what was called the "home market," through the establishment or development of industries whose employees would be purchasers of the farmer's products. The Republican platform of 1908, however, embodied a declaration for protection to all industries, including, of course, agriculture. When, in 1909, the Congress enacted the Payne-Aldrich law, which made few changes in the agricultural schedules, and no material reduction in the duties on manufactures, there was an immediate outcry by the farmers, who maintained that they had been unjustly treated, and that the Republican leaders had been unfaithful to their promise of "tariff-revision." The result of this anti-protection sentiment was shown in the election of 1910, when the Democrats elected a majority of the House of Representatives.

Recognizing the probability of defeat in the Presidential election of 1912, some of the Republican leaders, in the hope of allaying the hostility aroused by the alleged violation of the implied pledge for "tariff-revision" downwards, agreed to support what became known as the "Canadian Reciprocity treaty," which provided for the admission free of duty into the United States of practically all important Canadian farm-products and a few manufactured articles, while American products of the same kind were exempt from duty when exported to Canada. When the terms of the treaty were made public, a storm of protest broke forth from the farmers throughout the United States; and their opposition was so vigorous that ratification of the pact was delayed for several months, and was made possible only through a united vote of the Democrats, who saw in the measure an opportunity to foster Republican dissension that would be an advantage to the Democrats in 1912.

It is impossible to understand the growth of the farmers' bloc in Congress, or the demand of the farmers for the Fordney "embargo tariff" on farm-products, without knowing the grounds on which the opposition to Canadian reciprocity was based. Owing to the fact that the treaty contained a special clause, Section B, putting newsprint-paper on the free list, the farmers' side of the question was almost ignored by the press, and the farmers were represented as advocates of extreme protective duties and restricted trade. As a mat-

ter of fact, the farmers' leaders and spokesmen were explicit in their statements that they were not committed to high tariffs, but simply asserted that, so long as the policy of protection was adhered to, they would insist that agriculture should be protected to the same extent as manufactures. They pointed to the long period during which they had paid high prices for everything they had to buy, with the expectation that a "home market" would be created for them that would give them better prices for their products; and they asked why that market should be made free to foreign farmers. They were able to show that they would receive little or no benefit through lower prices on the few imported manufactures admitted free of duty, as the prices of these were not materially lower in Canada. Representatives of the great farmer-organizations declared that they were willing that tariff-duties should be reduced or abolished on farm-products if corresponding reductions or additions to the free list were made for all manufactured goods.

That the farmers were, and are, mistaken in supposing that they can be benefited by protective duties, may be admitted without lessening the strength of their position in 1911. What they resented was the selfishness of the great manufacturing interests, who wished to maintain the high tariff-wall against foreign goods, but to put farm-products on the free list, so that by reducing the cost of living for the workers the latter would not be so insistent in their demands for higher wages. It was only natural that the farmers should be practically unanimous in denouncing such an unfair proposition, or that, finding that there was no likelihood of any serious attempt to abolish the protective system, they should unite in demanding approximately equal protection for their industry. Personally I am, and have been for nearly forty years, a free trader. I am not trying to justify the attitude of the farmers, but to show why they changed from their advocacy of a low tariff in 1910, to advocacy of higher duties on all foreign farm-products. Had it not been for the exhibition of greed then given by the manufacturers, who favoured free trade for the farmer while enjoying the swollen profits of their highly-protected industries, it is not at all probable that the existing tariff would have been enacted. The farmers would have been divided in their party-allegiance, with a marked leaning toward low duties, and their influence would have been thrown against such high rates as now prevail in many tariff-schedules. One of the ablest farmer-leaders who opposed the Reciprocity treaty was a Democrat who favoured a low-tariff policy, but consistently maintained that, until the manufacturers were willing to abandon their demands for high protection, the farmers would not permit the adoption of one-sided free trade.

The agitation conducted by the great farmer-organizations against what they believed to be unfair treatment by the protected manufacturing-interests created a solidarity among the farmers in favour of political action to protect their interests; which later took shape in the farmers' bloc in Congress. Had the Republican leaders been wise and proposed a compromise in the direction of the moderate duties imposed by the Underwood tariff-law of 1913, and further reductions in certain schedules, a large percentage of the farmers would have been content with that law. When it was announced that there was to be a return to the Payne-Aldrich type of high protection for manufactures, the farmers decided that, since they could not hope to prevent the imposition of heavier taxes on foreign goods, they would demand equal protection for all their



products; and by bringing pressure to bear on their Senators and Representatives in Congress they were able to secure, first, the enactment of the temporary "embargo" tariff, and finally, the Fordney-McCumber law, imposing duties on farm-products previously on the free list, and increasing the rates on products already taxed.

Here it may be asked: Why did the farmers, through their accredited leaders, not make an effort to get rid of the high protective policy? The answer is that they were convinced that it would be impossible to persuade Congress to resist the demands of the great industrial interests, and that not even among the Democrats in Congress was there much genuine opposition to protection for manufactures. Faced with these conditions, the farmers, even those who knew that protection would be of little or no benefit to them, fell back on their demand for equal treatment with the manufacturers. The result was that the mills and factories got their duties raised to rates higher in many instances than had ever before been imposed, and the farmers got protection for their products, with the one exception of hides of cattle, which were continued on the free list.

It is hardly necessary to call attention to the fact that the farmers, with the exception of the sheep-raisers, beet-sugar growers and possibly a few others, have been bitterly disappointed because the new tariff has failed to bring them prosperity. In all sections of the United States there is a growing feeling that, as a cartoon in a Western farm-paper expresses it, the farmer has been "buncoed again." Instead of raising the price of wheat thirty cents per bushel, as the farmers were promised, the price of that staple product is down to pre-war figures. From nearly every farming-district comes a story of depression, bad markets, over-production and low prices for farm-products, while the price of almost everything the farmer buys has advanced. The progressive and radical farmer-leaders frankly admit that the tariff has benefited only a limited number of farmers, and assert that, as a whole, the agricultural industry is worse off than before the law was enacted. They are learning the obvious truth that, as long as the United States produces a large surplus of farm-products, markets must be found in other lands; and that, if we wish other countries to buy this surplus, we must be willing to take their manufactured goods in exchange.

One can see an indication of this changing sentiment in a statement issued by the American Farm Bureau Federation, which shows the farmer's gains and losses under the new tariff, and concludes that the net loss to agriculture from the protective policy is about \$300,000,000 annually. The Federation has also attacked the tariff on Canadian cattle, pointing out that the profitable industry, in the North-western States, of importing cattle and fattening and conditioning them on American farms, has been practically destroyed; and that, by thus limiting the purchasing-power of Western Canada in the United States markets, the tariff has injured American industrial activities.

It is, perhaps, significant that Magnus Johnson, the successful Farmer-Labour candidate for Senator, denounced the protective tariff; and his election by more than 90,000 plurality in a State that gave President Harding a majority of over 300,000 in 1920, shows that with the Minnesotan farmers the low tariff is returning to favour.

The Democratic party has an opportunity to win the support of the disaffected farmers by boldly declaring for a policy of genuine tariff-revision that will not only

repeal the excessively high duties imposed by the Fordney-McCumber law, but will make substantial reductions in the rates of the Underwood tariff. A promise of merely tinkering with certain schedules according to that imaginary standard, the difference between cost of production in domestic and foreign industries, will receive scant consideration. The farmers have been too often fooled by vague promises that have not been kept. One thing is certain: the farmers, even though convinced of the evils of protection, will not permit any reduction in duties on competing farm-products unless the rates on manufactures are correspondingly reduced. This may not be sound economics from the manufacturer's standpoint; but it is the farmer's position, and he is not likely to abandon it.

WHIDDEN GRAHAM.

### THE ORIGINAL BOLSHEVIK.

THE first great triumph of the proletariat within the Christian fold was won with the epistle of James. The struggle to keep his bolshevism out of the New Testament was long and, if we may accept the statements of the early fathers, actually riotous.

James, it must be admitted, carried his hatred of the business-man, of the landlord, of capital and of the rights of property in general to an extreme. His opposition to the rich extended even to those who were only well-dressed. His sympathy with the mob was so uncompromising, his determination to be like them was so grim, that he would not even take a bath. He seems to have been a trifle ostentatious in showing shabby proletarians into front seats at church. He was probably too ferocious in scowling upon fops with an interest in Christianity. He was certainly fanatical in sticking to his vegetarianism, in abjuring oil as an unguent, in dressing negligently, in consorting with social revolutionists.

Those primitive followers of Jesus who, after the Resurrection, wanted Christianity to be "nice," found James altogether too difficult a curve to negotiate. His prestige as the brother of our Lord had become too prodigious to be lowered by mere denunciation of him as unsafe and insane, although this was attempted at first. James had, for one thing, the enormous advantage of the perfect honesty of his fanaticism.

He had been anything but a follower of Jesus at first. Once he had opened the eyes of his spirit, once he got the "vision splendid," he started in to fight for his faith like the born rowdy he was. That was the best part of his conception of what in the Christian world are referred to so vaguely as "works." The Christian crowd in those days, and for some centuries after, bit and fought and kicked and scratched for the faith, and there is grave reason to fear that it all began with James. He was certainly always in the thick of it.

A modern reader would derive the best idea of the personality and the career of James from a study of Marat. This seems a trifle odd, of course. One would expect to find his exemplar among the pillars of the Soviet Republic. The personal equation enters into the case, however. James, like Marat, was hunted, hounded, hated, even by the radicals of whose movement he was a pillar as well as a foundation. James, like Marat, lived in cellars, and, like Marat, he issued his appeals for the revolution in grimly eloquent attacks upon what may well be termed the "right wing" of the Christian movement.

James belonged to the extreme left—like Marat again. James was infuriated at the prospect of the absorption of Christianity by its own better element—its Mirabeaus, its Robespierres, its Madame Rolands. James had the singleness of purpose of Lenin without Lenin's inaccessibility to a spiritual idea; James had the organizing genius



of Trotzky without Trotzky's innocent faith in economic determinism; and James had Rakowsky's boundless fertility of resource, and Radek's genius for propaganda, and Chicherin's gift for negotiation, without any of their readiness to compromise his bolshevik extremism in an emergency. While, then, James, so famous in the early church as one of the brethren of our Lord, was the first, the supreme, the inspired bolshevik, one can not go to the Russian revolution for his type, but to that of the French. Therein we find James, humanly speaking, incarnate in Marat.

How James in his own lifetime—indeed, long after—was hounded and hated by decent people; and with what reluctance his epistles were tolerated! There must have been many of these epistles. The effort to suppress James was so vigorous that only by a sort of miracle has any of his wonderful prose come down to us at all. The most convincing evidence of the versatility of his genius—he had more "scope" than even Paul—is afforded in the ease, the elegance, the subtlety of his Greek. The most finished scholar might scan the New Testament in vain for a writer comparable with James in compactness of style, in boldness of manner, in immediacy of effect. He has the short sharpness of an Elizabethan dramatist, or an American dime-novelist in the best days of Deadwood Dick.

Such arresting abruptness is the sure sign of the master of popular prose effects. The epistle of James, which alone has come down to us after that terrible fight in the early church to suppress it, manifests in every sentence that practice, practice, practice from which alone the writer—even the born writer—emerges irresistibly. Paul is, indeed, more of a rhetorician than James, and Peter is master of a more persuasive dialectic, and John has that sweet subtlety of his style; but James reaches the crowd as Marat reached the crowd—by understanding them, by "hitting" them, by "getting over" to them. John in his epistles must be far and away above the head of many a truck-driver, but one can not conceive that even a Calvin Coolidge would be impervious to James.

He was the incarnation of extreme radicalism on every plane; this ferocious, unkempt, ill-dressed, dirty brother of our Lord. The resemblance between James and Marat here, while intimately personal, is rendered striking by the methods of these men. James and Marat knew their mobs. To their mobs they were prophets and preachers as well as tactical leaders amid the vicissitudes of the street. A mystery involved the lives of both in the sight of those they led. Madame Roland once asked Danton if there really was such a man as Marat, just as the decent people of the early church disputed whether this rowdy of a James could possibly be identified with any individual in the family circle of the Lord. A controversy over the epistle of James invariably works out into a feud between the best people in the church and those dirty rowdies who have nothing and who never will have anything except their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

James, like Marat, would not play the game of these best people. Marat shrugged his shoulders at Robespierre, grieved over the inadequacy of Danton, and made a mockery of the Girondins. James had no patience with the rich young man. He sneered at the Jews in Jerusalem who wanted to make terms with the evangelists by editing the Sermon on the Mount.

After the crucifixion, the epistles of James were issued from tombs and cellars. The masses of the people of Judea came to feel for him what the French masses in their turn felt for Marat—anxiety at his perils, panic at his flights, edification at his prayers, reverence for the rags and the very blisters of one who suffered so much and risked so much for their sakes. James, like Marat,

seems always in process of rescue by some disorderly crowd from the clutches of the best people; for the bolshevism of James made him a terror to the well-bred, the well-dressed and the well-born. His epistles were suppressed, his ideas misrepresented, his standing as a member of the family of Mary and Joseph was denied.

The marvel is, accordingly, that any epistle of James ever got into the New Testament at all. The solitary specimen that has survived could be read in the churches only because the roughs, the toughs and the rowdies would have started a fight if they failed to get some of it. To James we are indebted for those fisticuffs in the primitive church which survive among some of the monks in Jerusalem to this day; monks whose type of Christianity is much nearer that of the Apostles than is the faith of the best people who sneer at them.

It would be ridiculous to argue, indeed, that James "got by" because he was a rowdy. James "got by" only because on the spiritual plane his genius was unique, overwhelming. First and greatest of bolsheviks, he remains the unique bolshevik because the eyes of his spirit, as Swedenborg would say, were opened. The constructive aspect of the genius of James may be inferred from his achievements. He was not only the original Christian radical. He was the original Christian monogamist agitator, the original Christian Science practitioner, the original Christian revivalist, the original leader of the Salvation Army. His preference for the methods of the knocker-down and the dragger-out was undeniably disedifying to ladies and gentlemen, but he started his riots only to take Christianity to the man in the street. When some people objected, James called them vile names. He had what the Irish call a fine fist, and he spread the faith with it; and many a time, as the phrase runs, was he beaten up.

All the hubbub and all the disedification were among the consequences of the appearance of the risen Lord to this James. The life of James prior to his vision had not been edifying. One wonders if in his career there might not have been such an affair as that of Marat with the printer's wife. Marat was transformed by that tragical episode. He was grimly chaste ever afterwards. It was characteristic of Marat that in the day of his power he repelled the exquisite girl who offered herself to him as a ransom for her father's life. The chastity of the leaders of proletarian upheavals—the leaders who count—is a neglected field in psychology, but we may infer that some tremendous personal experience inspired the horror of James, as it inspired the horror of Marat, for adulterers and adulteresses. Marat realized—for he was a physician and a profound one—the close connexion between sins of debauchery and the decay of the intellectual powers, and James writes like a man who had seen much to confirm him in similar views.

James, again, may have dreaded the effects of pagan impurity upon the fate of the early church. At any rate he made Christianity monogamous in theory. No great battle can be waged around such themes as celibacy, monogamy, polygamy or divorce without dragging in James. Few radicals nowadays ever suspect the responsibility of this great radical for the domination of Christian ethics by a monogamous ideal. James prayed and prayed that his followers might be pure in heart; and because he spent so many hours thus at his devotions his knees grew calloused. There are moments when he seems to speak from a richness of experience with sex which is strangely suggestive of the attitude of Marat towards revolutionists who consorted with loose women.

Quite apart from the radicalism of his chastity, James got into trouble with the best people because of his vehement denials that faith alone could save. Works—



James was for ever harping upon these. When his enemies undertook reprisals by looking for the works of James, they saw him going about with an unkempt mob, and they made much of that to his discredit. James, too, cherished a peculiar dislike for the business-type of man, now for the first time coming into his own. James was a true bolshevik in his opposition to a bourgeois. His resemblance to Marat here makes one suspect that the French revolutionary had read the New Testament much during his stay in Scotland. Or perhaps James wandered much in his youth, driven, like Marat, by a passion for ideas.

James seems from his writing to have had in him a touch of the physician, a little of the philosopher, all of the proletarian agitator. He had gone in for ideas and he learned to live for them. He may have felt himself a spent force at last. What an anticipation of Marat!

The transformation in James after that vision of the risen Lord makes us think of the transformation that was worked in the soul of Paul by the great light on the road to Damascus. Marat had some such vision in his bath, perhaps, before Charlotte Corday slew him. There was in the attitude of the best society towards James the contempt of the great world for Marat. It has been said of Marat that he had with the people the ties created between them by their kindred miseries and their identical humiliations. How true of James!

Despised by the rich, feared by the powerful, hunted by the lawful priesthood, James expressed himself at last through the medium of that Christianity which he was to render monogamous and proletarian. But for James, Christianity must have become the religion of the best people instead of their instrument. James made it disreputable, deadifying, disgraceful, but he made it so radical that the first thing to be outlawed by our war-legislation was his own epistle in the New Testament. James is utterly unassimilable by the Anglo-Saxon legal mind because he, like Marat, sought to work society over as the earth, to use Lamartine's expression, is worked over with a spade.

What Lamartine says of Marat applies so appositely to James! Philosophy, indignation, justice, vengeance, love for the masses, hatred for their exploiters, devotion, self-sacrifice, assassination, martyrdom—all were thrown together in the rushing current of his career. James and Marat fought for a Utopia of upheaval illumined from above by a ray of heaven's own light and from below by the fires of a social hell. The best people at Paris must have sighed with relief when they learned that Marat had been slain in his bath by a young girl with her dagger, just as the best people at Jerusalem must have received with edification the news that James had been killed in a fight by a blow on the head with a club.

ALEXANDER HARVEY.

## THE WIVES OF KING SOLOMON.

### V. A RAVENOUS WOLF.

ONCE again Solomon was rambling through the streets of Jerusalem. Not alone this time, but with a numerous company of young men amongst whom were several of his brothers. Drunken with wine were they all; and boisterously they roved along, singing and dancing and filling the air with loud laughter; for it was holiday time, the feast of Pentecost, festival of first fruits. And the streets of Jerusalem were thronged with people who had come from all corners of the land to celebrate their holiday. And all were drunk with wine, and all were merry and noisy, full of dance and song. But full of desire and lust too, they soon became; and fire smouldered in the hearts and eyes of the young men who with their glances

scorched the girls and women glowing with passion from wine and song and dance.

And the greatest lust burned in the group gathered about Solomon, for after the intoxicating wine, Solomon had found yet more intoxicating words to inflame the blood of his listeners. And as they roamed about the streets, Solomon suddenly saw a pair of lovers under a tree that stood far from the road. Upon his knees and in his arms, the youth was holding the maiden; and both were joined in a passionate kiss that made them oblivious of the whole seething city around them. Solomon stopped his companions, bidding them be quiet, and soon all were slowly stealing toward the tree like thieves.

Hidden from view was the girl's face, and they knew not if she were fair; but her body was alluringly slender, and every limb expressed the passion of her caress.

"How she can kiss, how she can kiss!" muttered Solomon, and his heart beat fast and strong, and his movements became as the movements of a tiger. Stealthily he crept close to the pair and bent over them. Breathing heavily, eyes closed, teeth pressed upon teeth, they were united in their kiss. Solomon watched them, living through with them the ecstasy of that kiss, but suddenly he cried out, "Enough!" Startled, the kiss-entranced lovers loosed their hold, and sprang to their feet.

"Take him away," he ordered his companions, "and do with him as you will." And there followed a wild affray, and with cries and sobs the young girl threw herself into its midst to protect her lover. But Solomon barred her way. "Never more will you kiss him. To me will you henceforth give all your wondrous kisses, to Solomon the King's son." And in mad struggling he smothered her cries with his lips on hers.

And when he brought her tearful, distressed, disconsolate, to Avia, his first wife, he laughingly said, "Comfort her, Avia, with your knowledge of the nature of man." And Avia then replied, "A ravenous wolf is man. Can this comfort you, my sister?"

DAVID PINSKI.

(Translated from the Yiddish by Anna K. Pinski.)

## LETTERS FROM ABROAD.

### HERE AND THERE IN GERMANY.

SIRS: The mark dropped yesterday to 414,000 to the dollar, which practically means that it is worth nothing at all. Still, people generally have not yet got on to this fact. Nothing seems to hold the German economic system together save habit and the stern necessity for some kind of currency. Already some of the shops are remaining closed during most of the day, and a dispatch from Frankfurt-am-Oder yesterday evening stated that this closing movement is general there. It is what happened in July and August, 1919, in Budapest, and I don't see any other outcome. Farm-products which can be stored at all, like butter, do not appear on the market except in small quantities and at incredible prices. There are eggs enough for sale, but only foreigners and the rich can afford them.

The buying mania continues; indeed it is not a mania at all, but the only sensible procedure. A thing is worth the same to-morrow as to-day; but a million marks was \$5.00 less than a week ago and is only \$1.25 now. Dabbling in anything where money is concerned is possible only on one basis: it is a bet that *things* will constantly command more marks. Bernard, the German boy with whose family I am staying, priced a new phonograph Saturday at 400,000 marks. Sunday he sold the old one at 500,000 and went around Monday evening to get the new, which



had jumped to 950,000. The man had sold him a good deal of stuff, and he let him have the machine at the price for that morning—650,000; so he did not feel the loss so heavily. I gave him 200,000 marks, which really left him the new phonograph and 50,000 marks for the old. But 50,000 marks amounted on Monday to something like eighteen cents. I had a bad leak in my raincoat, so I bought a new one for 1,900,000 marks that evening—about \$6.00. The barber shaves me for about an American cent and this morning at the baths I got a Roman, steam, and rub bath for twenty-five cents, including the tip. I asked the German who was in the hot-room how much he paid, and found they had charged him 20,000 marks instead of 60,000.

On the whole, people have been so honest and obliging that I think any of them who go to New York should be circularized, so they won't be robbed or swindled.

The German people have suffered so much that they are a mixture of stoicism and indifference. Day before yesterday, out at Prenzlau, a gust of wind upset the sailboat. One girl of twenty or so who could not swim, took it so calmly that my companion remarked about it when he had pulled her out of the water. "Oh, it wouldn't have mattered," she smiled. "We're used to everything now."

This does not apply in the case of the Ruhr. If the object of the French was to stir up hatred, they have certainly succeeded. A friend of mine who just came from the Ruhr (an American) saw crowds of people in the railway-stations, being deported from their own country. He says, and in fact every one who comes from the Ruhr seems to agree, that practically the whole population is gnashing its teeth. This temper comes out occasionally in retaliatory outrages which hurt the German Government; but the Government is a straw in the whirlwind. If the Government backed down, cries of "traitor" would go up all over Germany. The French know this, presumably, and are trying to force the Government to desert the people. Something has to break, that is certain, and before very long.

One interesting phase of the occupation and the passport-restrictions in the Ruhr and Rhineland, is that the French have been able to get nearly all the tourists' money away from the Germans this season. There are almost no tourists here. I think this is due almost entirely to the situation on the western frontier and to propaganda. If a traveller declares his money at the frontier on entering, he can take it out again. The rules about taking out purchases are simple, explicit, and apparently much fewer than last year.

A workable financial system can be established in only two ways, as far as I can see. The usual currency backed by gold would be impossible because the Germans can not get and keep enough gold while the reparations-problem remains unsettled. The banks, inspired by the Government, try to get all the foreign paper they can, it being stable and based on bullion not in the country. The price of American paper-money is consistently higher than that of gold. This, too, is evidently insufficient. If there were anything like enough foreign paper for a real monetary system, the Allies would find some way to get hold of it, and things would be as bad as ever.

The alternative is some kind of foreign control, as in Austria, for example. If this takes place, much depends upon the spirit, as well as the methods. The French evidently want a small Germany, with millions of Germans under foreign rule and the cream of the mineral and industrial resources as a nice little tip to themselves for helping the English, Russians, Americans, etc., to beat the Germans. The English would probably welcome a fair neutral international commission. Such a commission

would not even consider the bulk of the French claims, so they mean to hold out against it. Sympathy in Norway and Denmark was probably more with the Allies than with the Germans during the war; but it is certainly shifting. I talked with many people in both countries recently and found very few who did not condemn the policy of the French Government in the Ruhr.

I can understand the French fear of Germany; I have always found the French the most congenial people in Europe. The occupation of the Ruhr may have been necessary on account of the political situation at home. As an international move, it will certainly be disastrous to France herself unless she can get something by force and intimidation very soon. She has come to a place, through her own acts, where Europe's fear and mistrust of her are so great that she would actually run a risk of not getting justice from an international and neutral commission. In the meantime, nobody can say just what is likely to happen next. I, personally, think that the English fears of an economic collapse in Central Europe are well-founded. Our modern economic order derives most of its efficiency from a stability of finance which enables us to wait while things are being transported over long distances and put through long processes of manufacture. Nowhere are life and social order more thoroughly based on such waiting than in Central Europe. Modern economic life can not go on with a currency so shifting that it is mere gambling to start the production of things which are to reach the market months or years hence. Germany is eating herself, and using the walls to keep the furnaces going. Innumerable families would have no bedding if they were obliged to buy it now. It is almost impossible for young people to marry and start house-keeping. In spite of everything, they dance and sing sometimes. Why not?

P. S. This was laid aside yesterday, and we went out to Neubrandenburg in Mecklenburg to visit some relatives of a friend and look up some pensioners of his own friends in America. How ridiculous it is to prophesy about finances, is demonstrated by the drop of the mark yesterday to 760,000 to the dollar. An automobile-dealer from Hamburg was in the compartment when we came in last night. He said it has become impossible to import any foreign product like cars, and that the automobile-business must soon close down completely. It is foolish to sell a car for a half-billion to-day, and have to replace it next week at three billion.

In Neubrandenburg, things are worse than in Berlin. Butter is hardly to be had, with one of the richest farming-districts at the back door. We tried to get cakes with our coffee at noon, but none were obtainable. My friend's cousin who lives here, Mrs. M——, went with us, partly to see the old home-town and partly to get something edible to bring back. In Berlin, she had bought a pound of butter, such as it was, the night before, for 100,000 marks; but in Neubrandenburg she could not get any kind of butter at any price.

The Government is helpless. Postage for this letter is only 800 marks, a small fraction of a cent. The railways lose enormously for the same reason—the impossibility of changing the tariffs daily. The 'bus-fare from here (Schöneberg) to the Stettiner Bahnhof jumped yesterday from 3500 marks to 7,000. Railway-fares go up shortly.

One old chap whom we looked up yesterday is a sort of picture of the disintegration of German economic life. He was a tinsmith in New York, with a basement shop of his own. In 1920 he sold out, came back to Neubrandenburg, and prepared to finish his days in ease on about \$3000. He made the mistake of converting his dollars at three cents per mark. Yesterday he had 350 marks left—



not enough for a stamp for a postcard. He was living in an awful hovel, and cooking dubious potatoes for himself. Where he got them I do not know; we can not buy any in Berlin. When his American passport ran out in 1922 he had not the ten dollars for renewal, and could not stay any longer as a foreigner without it, so he sent it to Washington and gave up his American citizenship. He has been sick in the hospital (free, of course). Of all the down-and-outs I've seen, he is the type. I am, etc.,  
Berlin. M. M. K.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS.

HUMOURS OF THE TARIFF.

SIRS: I was rather struck by a paragraph in one of our papers copied from the *Freeman*, referring to Mr. Ford, in which you say, "If anyone thinks he can crowd Henry to the wall by copying his cars, the whole world is open to his enterprise."

But surely the United States is the largest market in the world for motors and is practically closed to the rest of the world. If Mr. Ford has no patent he has the greatest protection known. Perhaps that point was lost sight of. I am, etc.,  
London. J. W. HUNT.

THE FORMER STATUS OF FINLAND.

SIRS: In his article in the *Freeman* of 12 September, Mr. William Henry Chamberlin speaks of Finland as a former province of the Russian Empire. This is entirely erroneous. After the Swedish *coup d'état* of 1772, several members of the recently-created aristocracy, largely a product of the great wars of the previous period and, for the most part, of neither Swedish nor Finnish descent, dissatisfied with the new regime which to a certain extent eliminated the abuses from which the aristocracy had profited, began agitating for the severance of Finland from Sweden. Their aim was an aristocratic republic after the Polish pattern. They were encouraged in their efforts by the Russian rulers, with both money and promises of other assistance according to the time-honoured methods of the Russian Court. The war of 1789-90 forced a temporary stop in the Russian activities which were, however, soon renewed after the murder of Gustavus III. These culminated in the disastrous war of 1808-9. While the Swedish-Finnish army was still fighting the Russians in the far north, Alexander I was elected Grand Prince of Finland by the Finnish assembly. The peace of 1809 merely gave the *fait accompli* legal sanction, expressly stating that Finland should be a grand principality in *personal* union with Russia, with Alexander and his heirs as rulers. The efforts of Alexander III and Nicholas II, especially under the Bobrikov regime, to effect a closer union between the two countries met with steady opposition from the Finlanders and failed in its object. With the deposition of Tsar Nicholas, the Russian claims on Finland automatically ceased to have any legal validity. Soviet Russia, consequently, has no claims whatsoever on Finland.

The status of Esthonia and Livonia as determined by the peace of 1721 was entirely different.

In this connexion, it would perhaps be of interest to Americans to know that the Aland Islands which were awarded to Finland, thanks to Mr. Wilson's ignorance of European history and ethnology and the suspicious behaviour of an American Jew, never have been Finnish territory, nor were they recognized as such in the peace-treaty of 1809, when they were surrendered to Russia. I am, etc.,  
Chicago, Illinois. ERIC OSTERBERG.

GIPSY STORIES.

SIRS: I have travelled a good deal and have become thoroughly acquainted with the life, culture and literature of many countries both in Europe and on this continent. But I do not believe that there is anywhere a public more gullible, more easy to deceive, than that of the United States. As you have the greatest and ablest Barnums, you must also

have the largest number of naïve and credulous people. Here is one instance. As I am of Gipsy origin and as I know Gipsy life, I am naturally interested to read all that is written for or against that race or anything that makes it known to the world. Therefore, I was proud to hear that an American author had studied us and published stories about us, and that they had been accepted with enthusiasm. But how astonished was I when I read them! Their subjects were pure invention; and they were not even good literature. It was evident that their author had seen very little of Gipsies. Old, discarded, romantic style, some with nice, tame, happy or moral endings. Just glittering wild things, with which mediocre Americans like to be fed. As long as it is exotic and it looks eccentric it is all right. It is sufficient to find a publisher who advertises the stuff widely, who introduces some press-agent stunts in his publicity-work, and some friendly critics who are in the game, to become a celebrity. Really, how can you be such "easy marks?"

I wish you would publish this letter in order to open at least a few eyes. I am, etc.,  
New York City. RADU IORDANU.

BOOKS.

DRAGON-DRAMA.

THOUGH it is not free from errors, there is considerable truth in the first book to be circulated in America concerning Chinese drama<sup>1</sup>; and Miss Kate Buss also deserves thanks for seriously bringing her subject to the attention of Westerners. When, however, she prefaces her slim "Studies in the Chinese Drama" with a Chinese proverb that anticipates and denies Christian Science, "Without error there could be no such thing as truth," she invites us to apply the aphorism. What does she mean, for instance, by saying of Chinese actors, "Their faces are painted in delicate or exaggerated imitation of the infrequent sex"? Why does she risk offending people whom she evidently admires by speaking of one of them as "a Chinaman"? How can she so confuse the profound teachings of Lâo-tsze with the degenerate confusion of modern Taoism as to say that "Taoism is based on superstition"? (Would she say that Christianity, with its degenerate ways, is based on superstition?) How can she use spelling so "elaborate" as "emperour," "interiour" and, three times on one page, "villian"? And how can she use villianous English like "Symbols—as is the god of war—may vary in name to accord with the three doctrines of China"? Is she sacrificing to her proverb?

While the Chinese, with their incomparable poetry and painting, have neither considered nor developed their drama as a fine art, it has rewards for study: better rewards than Miss Buss has received, for better study than she has given. Since her book is not scholarly in substance or form, but rather a popular handbook, one wonders why she did not relieve it of a spectacled or at least a monocled manner by quickening her assembled facts and opinions with more of her own direct human observations. She bares herself to the suspicion that what has attracted her to the imperial theatre of China is not so much the human qualities of it—the human qualities which are the core of any permanent art—but the brocaded surface of it, the artifice, the convention, the exotic formalities. In her otherwise promising preface, she stresses not simplicity and penetration as the qualities of art that engage her, but "splendour" and "magnificence." But at least a romantic deference like this, which is typically American, helps to remove the sting from the fol-

<sup>1</sup> "The Chinese Theatre." Chu-Chia-Chien. Translated from the French by J. A. Graham. London: John Lane Co.  
<sup>2</sup> "Studies in the Chinese Drama." Kate Buss. Boston: The Four Seas Company. \$5.00.



lowing accusation, translated from a recent issue of the *Mercur de France*: "There are probably not ten people in the whole Occident to whom the words 'Chinese theatre' call up any image save a whirl of outlandish costumes amid a deafening clangour of gongs and cymbals."

In dealing with the origins of drama in China—the music dates from B. C. 5400, the religious dances from B. C. 2205—Miss Buss quotes, from the "Chou Ritual classic written several centuries before the time of Confucius," a passage concerning six ceremonial dances "in vogue at that early period":

In the first, wands with whole feathers were waved—in the worship of the spirits of agriculture; in the second, wands with divided feathers were used—in the ancestral temples; in the third, feather caps were worn on the head, and the upper garments were adorned with kingfisher feathers—in blessing the four quarters of the realm; in the fourth, yak-tails were used—in ceremonial for the promotion of harmony; in the fifth, shields were manipulated—to celebrate military merit; in the sixth, the bare hands were waved—in homage to the stars and constellations.

Anyone who has lived among the red Indians may well wonder, from such evidence, whether the origins of Chinese drama ought not to be studied in the western States of America. Though I can not answer for an exactly parallel application of ceremonial instruments, I can vouch for their obviously Chinese use among Hopi and Pueblo Indians in many of the dances I have watched during the past two years; and I can wish that there were some scholar, versed in the beliefs and observances of both peoples, who might forge, from these rituals, a new and golden link between the past of America and the past of Asia. The Smithsonian Institution, or some of those commendable associations that have newly arisen for the appreciation and defence of American tribal culture, should promptly enlist native Chinese scholars to study our Indians and explain them to us—now that America has begun to realize her need of all the beauty, dignity and antiquity she can preserve. A generous Chinese traveller told me once that he thought his people were the offspring of America. The usual theory is that the first Americans were immigrants from China, possibly across Bering's Strait, where in winter they might have walked the ice. Others believe there was only one continent, with no Pacific. Whatever happened, it is certain that, among the most native Americans "the origins of Chinese drama" remain to-day a living phenomenon of almost unsullied imagination and beauty; and the investigator would discover in many details a development similar to that of the Asiatic.

In recording the growth of the Chinese drama, in noting the types of plays and actors, in considering the integral music, the imagined scenery and the solid "costumery," Miss Buss is more successful than in conveying a sense of inner vitality in the art she presents; whether it be the art of the playwright, the art of the actor or the art of the audience. "Although nearly all Chinese plays in contemporary use," she writes, "date from one of the three prolific periods of the country, the T'ang Dynasty, A. D. 720-905, the Sung Dynasty, A. D. 969-1277 and the Yüan Dynasty, A. D. 1277-1368," it is agreed they lack the literary value of the poetry and the novels written during the same epochs." She quotes at the head of a chapter: "The art of the actor cuts the sinews of all earnest government." But when, as a reason for the drama's literary poverty, she remarks, "The actor is so de-

spised in China that he has not had the association of scholars, and the playwright has suffered for the actor's stigma," she forgets possibilities amid parallel conditions, the magnificent emergence of Marlowe, Shakespeare and their crew above all social prejudice and constraint. Perhaps China's great dramatists are due to-day, since her drama is at about the same stage of development that English drama had reached in the sixteenth century.

It is notable that Miss Buss fails to impress on her reader a single memorable theme from Chinese drama. That this is an unnecessary omission I can testify from experience in at least one Chinese playhouse. In China, and in Japan as well, dramatic themes have usually seemed to me exaggerated and strained, even trivial, just as our love-themes seem to an Oriental; blind loyalty-devotion being as silly a procedure as blind love-devotion. But I have seen one traditional Chinese drama of great force and beauty. It was a story of Chu-kê Liang, an eminent sage, statesman and general of the third century, and a frequent subject, by the way, in T'ang poetry. It concerned his treatment of a notorious rebel, called the "Pheasant Chieftain." When the rebel was captured, Chu-kê Liang set him free. This crazy generosity, to the consternation and despair of the loyal staff, was repeated six times. Each liberation was carefully enacted—the same thing over and over—without lessening the regard of the most patient people on earth. Variety was obtained by the methods of capturing the rebel: acrobatic battles, an ingenious ambush, an individual exploit, a stealthy seizure. One of the captures was managed through the aid of wine, woman and song. The women-spies were led by an actor well-known for his English library and for his familiarity with English songs. The drama had been presented strictly according to tradition; but, suddenly, at the side of the stage, a pale Swede with a brass band in uniform displaced the Chinese orchestra. Then entered the seductive women in low-necked, short-skirted gowns of green tulle, with green silk stockings and high-heeled satin slippers. Their coiffures were American, as was their dance; a rag-time cakewalk, performed by these men with a spirit and feminine grace that would have thrilled an American city. Anachronistic? Certainly. But anachronism is not anachronism unless you know it. Chu-kê Liang's period was remote from the Chinese audience. So were the manners, costumes and dances of Broadway. So was the song! The leading siren advanced, mincing; the band struck up a tune that whacked me in the vitals; and a falsetto voice sang, in fair English, "It's a Long Way to Tipperary." I must have been humming it myself unawares. Before I knew what had happened, I, the sole foreigner in the great theatre, had been heaved to my feet by the Chinese around me, and was singing a duet with a famous Chinese prima donna. Only after the shouts of "Hao! Hao!" and the encore, did I realize how strange it all was, and yet how simple and human and natural. In a few minutes these actors, who had tolerated me and my interruption, were celebrating the final voluntary surrender of the Pheasant Chieftain and were singing in unison to a mountain-god a hymn of praise so exultantly beautiful and so thrillingly voiced and sustained that I prickled with goose-flesh and understood the ecstatic audience. Miss Buss is right when she says, "Although a dissimilar sense-perception renders Chinese music unpleasant to the average Western ear, an occasional Occidental agrees with the Chinese to find it passionate, provocative, submissive, commanding, or sentimental, in accord with

<sup>1</sup> These dates are more properly 618-907, 907-1280 and 1280-1368.—W. B.



the action of the play, and of an inherent and singular beauty." I acknowledge that my taste for Chinese music had to be acquired; but I maintain that in Western grand opera I have never heard anything "grander" than this Chinese chorus of praise. Nor have I ever seen in Western drama anything nobler than the climax which occasioned the chorus. The Pheasant Chieftain, set free for the seventh time, refused the proffered liberty, ardently yielded himself and his services to Chu-kê Liang, and joined with the others in musical thanksgiving for a change of heart complete and jubilant. Then came Chu-kê Liang's quiet comment: "You may capture a man's body six times; but you can not capture the man until you have captured his spirit."

If Miss Buss had seen this play, surely she would have told us about it. But are there no others as fine?

A partisan of imperial drama, Miss Buss dismisses modern experiments in the Chinese theatre as unimportant: "Recent deviations in a few minor theatres are as yet transitory and without focus." It seems incredible that she can say this, if she has visited Mr. Shaha's theatre in Shanghai and seen any of his superb productions. Though she may deplore his adoption of Japanese and Occidental methods, she owes him at least a mention of his extraordinary scenic and mechanical achievements, which outshine those of Mr. Belasco and the Hippodrome. I have seen on his stage the entire façade of a Shanghai hotel with its incandescent lights and the pedestrians, rickshas, carriages and motor-cars in the street before it. I have seen a canal of real water in which a miscreant tried to escape by swimming. I have seen a sensationally popular drama in which Mr. Shaha presented, within a few months of the actual occurrences, a front-page murder-story. A Christian Chinese, in a motor-car borrowed from an American friend, had taken a celebrated sing-song girl out into the country and strangled her for her jewellery. He needed money to keep pace with his foreign companions at the race-course and elsewhere. The murder baffled both Chinese and foreign detectives. Finally the girl appeared to her mother in a dream, revealing the secret. A Catholic priest, hiding the fugitive, drew angry roars from the audience. The culprit was finally overtaken in a boat on the canal which I have already mentioned. All the characters involved in the real episode, both Chinese and foreign, were represented in the play by their own names. A hint for New York! Whether or not such drama is "transitory" in China, it is interestingly transitional. In this particular play there was an acute blend of realistic and heroic presentation. The Chinese playwright, management, actors and audience are afraid neither of the real nor of the heroic; and many of their "deviations," from the imperial theatre of China and from the republican theatre of the West, are both impressive and prophetic.

On the general subject of drama, Miss Buss concludes: "At this hour in the Chinese theatre the disturbing and vital question is whether or no a republican government will corrupt the Imperial drama to destroy such unparalleled stage-tradition." Let me call to her attention and to that of her readers the following opinion of Dr. Hu Shih, "unchallenged leader of the 'literary revolution'" in China:

The present conservatism in regard to the reform of the Chinese theatre is largely due to a failure to see that the Chinese drama as it stands to-day is precisely a case of long-arrested development. The singing and acrobatic feats, the unnatural voice and gesture, the symbolic movements to take the place of changing scenery, and many other defects

of the Chinese drama must be regarded as vestiges which have survived their usefulness, and certainly not as culminating points beyond which no further improvement is necessary or desirable.

Is it not likely that Miss Buss is more concerned with the imperial gloss of Chinese drama, and Dr. Hu Shih with its human glow? A good deal that to Miss Buss is as alluring and novel as the nonsense of Miss Gertrude Stein is to Dr. Hu Shih as flat and stale as the nonsense of "Way Down East." But, in spite of their diverse approaches, let us hope that Miss Kate Buss and Dr. Hu Shih may join forces in resisting the imminent American invasion of the field of Chinese drama, an invasion that is being planned with the assistance of a benighted ex-Premier, Chou Tsu-chi. According to the papers, the Dragon Film Company is to "establish two thousand movies throughout China within the next year" and to carry, even into the remote interior, "American society films, Wild West thrills, serials and comedies, as portrayed by Hollywood."

WITTER BYNNER.

#### A PAGAN MORALITY.

JEAN COCTEAU'S "Le Grand Ecart"<sup>1</sup> is said to have been received sourly in France by those among his old colleagues to whom the young artist and poet would most naturally have looked for encouragement in his first essay in sustained fiction. The reason is not very far to seek. That the youth who synthesized the Impressionist formula in the sublime defiance: "the best book is only the dictionary in confusion," should have marshalled thoughts and phrases into a form that a man over thirty can understand—this is bad enough. But that he should have relied for his contrasts on a theme as old as Voltaire's "Candide," and have drawn his humour from a fount as secular as Molière's, seems to mark a definite apostasy. Fanatical spirits who, in the words of Aragon, have ended by finding "something sacred in the disorder of their own thought," must feel that their old associate has played them a somewhat unworthy trick. Like the entourage of Nasreddin at the Opéra, who, after sitting entranced through the harmonies of an orchestral tuning-up, were suddenly assailed by the cacophony of a Verdi overture, they have a right to cover their ears. At any rate, Cocteau, the spoiled child of the Impressionists, has spoken. And his first intelligible word does not sound in the least like "Dada."

"Le Grand Ecart" is both meretricious and meritorious; frugal in form and astringent in quality. With what an eye these young writers view their world; rigid and tearless, cut into as many facets as the cornea of a fly under the microscope! But Cocteau's novel is noteworthy on more commendable grounds than the surface cleverness for which a better word than "brilliance" has yet to be found. It is an attempt to probe *au fond*—and by a method of which those terrible surgeons, the French psychologists, still hold the secret—all that is implied by an "inferiority-complex."

It might almost be called another "Education Sentimentale" with whatever advantages a further half-century of sophistication can bestow. Jacques Forestier is begotten of Frédéric Moreau, as the latter is in the legitimate line of Candide. But he is Frédéric with a difference. Flaubert's sorry hero, despite his *lacheté*, found a sort of perverse salvation by clinging, under all imaginable circumstances, to the sentimental solution. Jacques not only has no solution for the recurrent crises that beset him, but hardly any individual existence between them. Cocteau has

<sup>1</sup> "Le Grand Ecart." Jean Cocteau. Paris: Librairie Stock.



achieved the really remarkable feat of presenting a character who exists only in his relation to others. That such depreciated types, their insufficiency thinly disguised by the automatism of life, are common currency, is no secret to observers. Nietzsche once identified them in his own mordant fashion. "Would I were some one—anyone else," he imagines them saying. "But alas! I remain I." Jacques is of this race, the vast clan of the spiritually homeless; a constitutional nostalgic for countries of which he knows less than nothing. "From his childhood he had a desire, not so much to be loved by whatever presented itself to him as beautiful, as to be transformed into it." Jacques is more than feeble. His is the vacuum which nature is said to abhor and which attracts the roving electric fluid. "Physical beauty has an insolent way of its own of being at home everywhere. Jacques, the perpetual exile, craved it. The less amiable it was, the more profoundly it moved him. His destiny was to be wounded by its contact. . . . If any of the skilled and ferocious hunters of Paris should find him in his corner, it would be the simplest matter in the world to twist his neck. It needed only a word to demoralize him."

The little world of "*noceurs*," "*boursiers*," kept women and worse that is thrown into relief against this background of nullity is amusing, sordid and unimportant. Cocteau, in his way, is a bacteriologist. He picks his malign specimens from off the sore of society, smears them on the gelatinous soul of Jacques, and regards the culture with a scientific and impersonal eye. As a result, we get some remarkable growths. "Germaine drew her freshness from the dung-heap. She gorged herself upon it with the gluttony of the rose. . . . Her laugh, her lips, her cheeks owed their splendour to panics on the stock market." Jacques and his fatal mistress are together in a bar, worse than suspect, where a young man, wearing a necklace of pearls, goes from table to table, mincing and cackling with all the gestures of an accomplished coquette. In this infamous resort, "what Jacques needed more than anything else was some fixed point; to imagine his father or mother, for example, walking across the floor. But he was far from them, far even from himself, floating contentedly on filthy waters. Alone he would have been seized with disgust. But, mingled with Germaine, who was quite at home with this fetish, he felt no revulsion, and lived on."

"Le Grand Ecart," it may be frankly owned, is untranslatable. The most broad-minded of Bowdlerizers would shrink from the task; the content would be scanty indeed once the Gallic salt had been evaporated. But to admit that a book is untranslatable is by no means to deny that it may be read with profit as well as pleasure. On the threshold of the war, Charles Péguy lamented that "the pagan blood was flowing back." There seem to be two attitudes to adopt in face of the literature that is the result of this reflux. One is resolutely to avert the intelligence from the whole thing, and to pay the honest penalty of missing a great deal that is significant, and not only for ill, in the work of modern writers. But there is another not incompatible with a considerable degree of ethical uprightness. This is to have a little more faith in human nature, even of the neo-pagan sort, and to leave to those who from long use and hardihood are not averse to handling them, the task of correcting pagan morals by pagan satire. Looked at from this point of view, I am not sure that Cocteau's book might not be classed as a morality. "*Tout risait de travers*" is the motto he has chosen for his title-page. The more traditional "*Castigat ridendo mores*" would hardly be out of place. It comes to about the same thing in the end.

HENRY LONGAN STUART.

## A GENUINE ESSAYIST.

It is a tribute to Mr. Huxley's talent that the short essays collected in "*On the Margin*,"<sup>1</sup> most of them slight, many of them topical, the periodical response to passing stimuli, should still be worth reading a second time. Most of them are reprints from a light causerie provoked by contemporary incidents which the author at one time conducted in the *Athenæum*; yet though these incidents are now indifferent to us, the discussion of them is almost as interesting as ever. The reasons for this are that Mr. Huxley selected from these happenings the most humanly typical, and that in any case he has always something concrete to say about them. He writes on "Pleasures," "Modern Folk-Poetry" (the poetry of the music-hall), "Democratic Art," "Advertisement," "Beauty in 1920"—the things about which a cultivated journalist would write either with induced enthusiasm or with mock facetiousness. Mr. Huxley's originality consists in the fact that his appreciation and his facetiousness are alike genuine. He is rarely at a loss with his themes, even when one feels that they will yield only chaff in the way of comment; and in discussing without intellectual embarrassment topics with which everybody is acquainted, he provides in an indirect way a body of interesting criticism of modern life. He has one, at least, of the qualities of a first-class writer: the knowledge that if one is to write seriously or amusingly, one must be really serious or amused. There is in English journalism at present a convention of the conscientious, almost officially serious essay, and one of the superior, mock-facetious essay; but there is none of the essay written when in fact one happens to be impressed or amused. Mr. Huxley does not share the general superstition that, when a thing, such as the music hall or a new fashion, happens to be contemporary, one is debarred from writing naturally and objectively about it; and he is always worth reading because he has a genuine attitude to his subject, and does not follow, except in unessentials, any current convention.

In short, he always puts his finger on something real, whether it is important or trivial. For instance, in "*Accidie*," a short history of ennui, he traces the moral permutations of that emotion "from the position of being a deadly sin, deserving of damnation [in the Middle Ages], to the position, first, of a disease and, finally, of an essentially lyrical emotion, fruitful in the inspiration of much of the most characteristic modern literature." He asks: "What is the significance of this fact? For clearly the progress of accidie is a spiritual event of considerable importance. How is it to be explained?" He explains it by the headlong rush of history since the French Revolution; by the hopes which rapid change awakened and disappointed; by "the discovery that political enfranchisement, so long and stubbornly fought for, was the merest futility and vanity so long as industrial servitude remained in force"; by the exhausting lives which men live in large cities; by the war, and so on. He sums up: "Other epochs have witnessed disasters, have had to suffer disillusionment; but in no century have the disillusionments followed on one another's heels with such uninterrupted rapidity as in the twentieth, for the good reason that in no century has change been so rapid and so profound." I quote this to show how generally Mr. Huxley keeps his finger on something real, how little inclined he is, once he has started a theory, to let it run away with him from the world of fact as the keenest intelligences see it. He has a gift for digging up the real question, and, by putting it concretely before us, for starting us on lines of speculation which are rarely profitless. When he propounds a solution it has

<sup>1</sup> "*On the Margin*." Aldous Huxley. New York: George H. Doran Co. \$2.00.



generally, if not certainty (which is hardly to be expected in human questions), a degree of probability with which it is almost as difficult to disagree. On serious themes he is equally free from ponderosity and affected lightness; the two chief faults which themes of that kind are likely to provoke. His lighter essays are trivial; yet there is sufficient sense in their triviality to make them quite delightful. But his distinguishing quality as an essayist is an admirable inability to be foolish and banal, even on subjects which provoke it; and that is, indeed, rare.

EDWIN MUIR.

### MAN AND CULTURE.

AFTER an overlong period of dormancy American anthropologists are at last alive to the demands of the general public, and a series of synthetic works has been the result of this awakening. Of these Dr. Clark Wissler's "The American Indian" is one of the most important, being in fact the solitary up-to-date summary of the subject. Quite recently its author has elaborated a number of lectures into a unified whole.<sup>1</sup>

The subject Dr. Wissler has chosen this time is of even wider scope than that of the preceding volume. He attempts nothing less than an elucidation of that basic concept of anthropology which presents such insuperable difficulties to the uninitiated, perhaps precisely because of its deceptive appearance of simplicity—the concept of culture. A formal definition, such as E. B. Tylor's classical formula in "Primitive Culture," can be grasped readily enough; but by itself such a statement offers little more illumination than corresponding definitions of electricity, life, or consciousness. Only by observing the manifold aspects of these ideas in the flesh can the human mind approach an understanding of their significance. On the whole, Dr. Wissler has been extraordinarily successful in his exposition. He drives home the fact that social anthropology is not concerned with odd specimens from the savage workshops or quaint fragments of custom and belief, but that human culture is a continuous whole, of which our boasted Western civilization is merely a specific sample; and by using what E. Sapir calls "contrastive perspective," he attempts to throw into relief the distinctive features of Occidental society. Step by step the generalizations of modern ethnology—sometimes common-places to the specialist but often impenetrable mysteries to the general reader—are set forth: the relative independence of nationality and culture, the cumulative character of civilization, its persistence despite seeming destruction. Perhaps the most fascinating feature of the book consists in the rapid glimpse it affords of the chief theoretical problems that engage the attention of the cultural anthropologist. With a few bold strokes the author sketches the problem at hand and passes on to the next. We may sometimes feel inclined to linger a little longer over some specific point. For instance, the matter of correlations (Dr. Wissler clings to Tylor's old term "adhesion") might well have occupied twice the number of pages that are allotted to it. But the net result is that, while enigmas may not be solved, the reader is at least made aware of their existence and discovers the status of expert opinion. On the moot question of diffusion, Dr. Wissler maintains the sane middle-ground of most Americanists, accepting as an indisputable fact the constant and frequent occurrence of borrowing, yet declining to deny the possibility of an independent invention or to embrace as inspired truths what are at best serviceable tentative hypotheses.

As Professor Ostwald once remarked, a reviewer saves time by not wasting too many words on expressions of

assent. So the brief but genuinely enthusiastic acclamation with which I am greeting Dr. Wissler's new work shall be followed by a lengthier exposition of my exceptions to two rather striking chapters, "The Genesis of Culture" and "The Individual and Race in Culture."

The excessive conciseness of the former makes me uncertain whether I wholly understand it, for the documentation of its thesis might well have filled a whole volume. As far as I can see, Dr. Wissler has hazarded a remarkable anthropo-geographical generalization. He divides the world into three great habitat zones, which are correlated on the one hand with basic racial groups, and, on the other, with profoundly distinct cultural trends. These main areas are labelled "Mesa," "Tundra," and "Jungle," respectively, and the great civilizations of history are definitely identified with the first-named, both in the Old World and the New. Though a certain latitude may be granted in the definition of the geographical terms, I can not detect any useful purpose in classing Australia as "jungle land" or in assigning the seat of ancient Egyptian culture to a highland. Admitting that the once-established pattern of a civilization largely frames its subsequent evolution, I can not help feeling that the extent of this tendency is overemphasized. As for the racial associations, if Egypt is part of the earth's mesa, it was certainly not the home of a round-skulled population (p. 230). One of two other points suggest casual slips, possibly typographical errors, for I can not believe that Dr. Wissler would synchronize pre-Chellean France with Egyptian pottery (p. 238); or that he would include the higher cultures of India among those which repudiate the use of milk (p. 240). I eagerly look forward to a revision and expansion of this section that shall eliminate these lapses, and by amplification clarify the suggestive theoretical ideas which the author has broached.

If I am afraid that I have not fully understood Dr. Wissler's views on anthropo-geography, I am afraid that I have understood his treatment of the race-question. It seems to suffer both from overtimorousness and from overconfidence; the former being unfortunately limited to the general possibility of attaining scientific conclusions on the subject, the latter to the extremely meagre direct evidence extant and the popular preconceptions that require no evidence whatever. There is no integration of these divergent attitudes; hence the total impression which the author produces is that of the famous procession in which every three steps forward is compensated by two steps backward. If it is true that "changes in culture are too frequent to be correlated with morphological changes" (p. 298), then the whole popular argument resting on differences of racial achievement is scientifically worthless. Further, Dr. Wissler does not explain that it is possible to attribute difference in achievement to a mere difference in variability without a difference in average ability: one race may simply produce more geniuses than another. But this question is inextricably bound up with that of relative numbers: it is no more reasonable to expect a tribe of a thousand to produce epoch-making inventions than to expect such results from a small Middle-Western prairie-town. The direct reference in regard to inequality cited in the book is certainly inconclusive. If a Californian Indian accustomed to the use of the bow and arrow was excelled by a white archer, the racial significance of the fact is eliminated by Dr. Wissler's own comment that "it is superiority of method that has enabled the modern sport of archery to far surpass the real archery of a few centuries ago." In any event the observation is more than offset by Galton's remark that an Eskimo chart examined by him was far superior to any white traveller's he had ever seen that was not constructed with the aid of instruments. Again, an appeal to direct

<sup>1</sup> "Man and Culture." Clark Wissler. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Co. \$2.75.



psychological tests is certainly in order; but the passing reference to a particular report on the relative standing of American Indian and Caucasian children (p. 288) is not decisive because nothing is said of the social setting of the subjects. My dissatisfaction with this part of Dr. Wissler's book is largely due to my disappointment at his failure to outline a programme of investigation that shall satisfy both the anthropological and the psychological requirements of the case, for his statistical knowledge and familiarity with the techniques of both sciences seemed to predestine him for the task. The subject is, of course, not an easy one, but I am convinced that some of the difficulties that beset the author's spirit are wholly imaginary. The environmental factor *can* be eliminated to a considerable degree, and a reasonable measure of freedom from bias is quite possible. I do not know of any scientists "who are often found denouncing the pro-Nordics in most intemperate fashion and at the same time encouraging the antis" (p. 285). There is a difference between pro-Nordics and charlatans who use the pro-Nordic propaganda for their own ends. It is true that Mr. Madison Grant has expressed anti-Nordic sentiments because he can not reconcile himself to the idea of Scandinavians who, instead of engaging in promiscuous carnage, develop dairying and contribute to the world's literature and science. But, assuredly, Dr. Wissler does not reckon Mr. Grant either as an anthropologist or as one of those "apostles of peace, tolerance, and equality" (p. 285) at whom he levels an inexpensive gibe?

These provisos and criticisms in regard to relatively small portions of Dr. Wissler's book should not be taken as casting doubt upon its very great value to students and readers in general. Nowhere else will they find so convenient and attractive an introduction to the dynamics of cultural history; and the teacher of the social sciences, whether or not in total agreement with the author's interpretations, will find this an ideal textbook, both for its solid contributions to the student's knowledge and because it serves as a whetstone for their critical acumen.

ROBERT H. LOWIE.

### A NEW STUDY OF TENNYSON.

ONE of the most interesting aspects of modern literature is to be found in the way our generation takes its pleasure in dispassionately scrutinizing the great figures of the last century. There can be little doubt that we are eminently fitted for this innocent pastime. Cradled in incredulity our scepticism, under the influence of the stirring events of the last decade, has taken upon itself a disillusionment as universal as it is absolute. The values of our fathers are not our values. Indeed, it may be doubted whether we have any values at all. This being the case, who could be better qualified to throw up into a light free from preconceptions the solemn, earthly way-faring of our over-grave ancestors?

Mr. Harold Nicolson's book on Tennyson<sup>1</sup> serves as an admirable example of the success that often attends our modern biographical method. With a detached and calculating eye, Mr. Nicolson follows the slow-moving course of the Laureate's career as a stoat from the outskirts of some forest wild might watch the clumsy, deliberate meanderings of a lettuce-fed buck-rabbit in a wired-in playground. His main thesis rests on his belief that Tennyson was "intended to be a subjective poet, and was forced by circumstances into fifty years of unnatural objectivity"; that he was, in fact, by nature a mystical lyric poet of the first order and only accidentally, as it were, became the official mouthpiece of all those semi-philosophic, semi-moral platitudes which, so dear to his con-

temporaries, have become so unutterably tedious and irrelevant to us. Tennyson, he declares, was a great poet but not a great prophet. Alas, it becomes more and more apparent as decade follows decade that the intellect behind the formidable, familiar, leonine countenance of the Laureate may practically be discounted.

Tennyson's attitude towards the religious difficulties of his day is touched upon by Mr. Nicolson in a truly twentieth-century manner:

The problem which Tennyson set himself to solve was in its essence that of reconciling science with religion. It was not an easy problem. For whereas religious revelation remained where it was, the scientists evolved some new and startling revelation every few months. It was difficult to know what to do. To draw back would imply a recognition of defeat; to go forward might... Tennyson refused to contemplate what might happen if he went forward. He decided to remain where he was.

And so Mr. Nicolson having put us on the scent of this quarry "with the sensitive pulses of a mystic," we follow the trail from the little room at Somersby Rectory to the final resting-place in Westminster Abbey. The chase is illuminating and diverting, and when it is all over one's estimation of Tennyson's personality is raised rather than diminished. Indeed, one grows more and more fond of this great, slouching, untidy man who refused to become a clergyman, who postponed marrying the girl he loved for the space of twenty years, and who, with such grave dignity, assumed the rôle of "civic poet, communal bard" for half a century.

With delightful sureness and understanding the author unfolds the simple backgrounds of the poet's life. We see his Lincolnshire home with "the hollyhocks and the lilies, and the little white attic upstairs with the dimity curtains, the smell of honeysuckle and the hooting of the owls at nighttime"; and we see Cambridge and his rooms in Corpus Building where, on his last night at the University, his egregious friends, the "Apostles," danced together a parting quadrille till he drove away with a last impression of "Thompson's handsome face under the light of the street lamp." We envisage the long years at Farringford, the walks on the downs through the little gate at the end of the lane, the slow, uneventful summers passed in "mowing the lawn in spectacles and black sombrero," and composing poetry in "one of those pretty little manuscript-books" his wife used to make for him. "The Peace of God," Tennyson once wrote, "came into my life before the Altar when I wedded her." "We may well believe it," retorts Mr. Nicolson, somewhat unkindly. And then we come to that penultimate period in Surrey when "the nineteenth century entered with ponderous solemnity upon its last three decades; and year by year the conifers grew higher against the dim distances of the weald, and the ivy and the ampelopsis obscured the clear-cut corbels, the heraldic reliefs with which Sir James had so cunningly enlivened the façade of Aldworth," and so to the last scene when the nave of Westminster Abbey was lined with veterans of Balaclava.

To the thunder of his own verses the coffin was lowered and the pall removed. And then they all streamed out again into the autumn sunlight, into the noise of the 'buses and the hansoms jingling up from Victoria to Whitehall, and the cries of street-boys selling broad-sheets of "Crossing the Bar." For days a reverent line of people filed past the wooden barrier that framed the grave; and then the chrysanthemums and the laurels were removed and the stone was let into the pavement and on the pillar opposite was placed the Woolner bust. And to-day the feet of tourists pass and repass idly above the slab that marks his tomb.

This last quotation is a good sample of Mr. Nicolson's style at its best; and how essentially modern it is, with its

<sup>1</sup> "Tennyson." Harold Nicolson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$4.00.



close, realistic observation, tempered with a half-expressed consciousness of the great flowing tide of time before the undammed current of which the preoccupations of the human race avail, after all, so little!

But how is it that the great man's poetry has suffered such undeserved neglect and disparagement during recent years? Probably Mr. Nicolson is not far from the truth in his suggestion that the pernicious taste of the "Apostles" for "teaching," coupled with the pathetic desire of the subjects of Queen Victoria to be taught, set Alfred Tennyson upon a course of writing most sadly detrimental to the expression of his true poetical genius. The same idea has been expressed by an American poet:

'Minstrel, what have you to do  
With this man that, after you,  
Sharing not your happy fate,  
Sat as England's Laureate?

'Minstrel, what is this to you:  
That a man you never knew,  
When your grave was far and green,  
Sat and gossipped with a queen?"

LLEWELYN POWYS.

#### SHORTER NOTICES.

MR. HARRY KEMP manifestly tackled a congenial task when he set himself to the translating of Tirso de Molina's drama of *Don Juan*.<sup>1</sup> He has, as he explains in a characteristic introduction, allowed himself a considerable latitude in the rendering—a freedom which results in his calling the translation a "transmutation." In an accomplishment of this sort, the spirit and the flavour have much to do with the outcome, and Mr. Kemp has done credit both to the original and to himself. The Spanish play is a decidedly episodic affair; the climaxes are abrupt and the shifts of scene are many. The English version is animated, natural and picturesque. L. B.

READERS for whom the name of Mary Shelley suggests the "Gothic" horrors and the turgid prose of "Frankenstein," will not be prepared for the aspect of her talent that is revealed by the two "mythological dramas" that have just been printed from manuscript. The crude but very real power of that romance is as far as possible from the somewhat flimsy fancy with which the classical legends of Proserpine and Midas are here put into dramatic form.<sup>2</sup> Slight and unpretentious as they are, however, these dramas need no apology for their appearance in print, though the lapse of a hundred years has given them a faded and old-fashioned air, and though they reach no very lofty heights of lyric or dramatic intensity. As minor fruits of that absorption in classical mythology which gave us, on another plane, "Prometheus Unbound" and "Hyperion," they have a validity of their own; and the blank verse is competent enough to be read without condescension. Finally, as the editor points out, they furnish us with the original setting for which Shelley himself wrote two or three well-known lyrics—including the "Arethusa"—and so have for the student an interest which supplements their intrinsic value.

N. A.

"DITTE: TOWARDS THE STARS"<sup>3</sup> is the last of the trilogy which tells of the peasant girl who went into service, and passed through the experiences of love and companionship and motherhood under all the gnawing discouragements that face a girl of the people. Poverty walks like a spectre through these novels of Nexö; but, like Hamsun, he knows the sting of it from the pit of the stomach, and faces it with a humorous insight and understanding which the mere observer would lack; so that, in portraying the genial harridan, old Rasmussen, who continually poisons herself by an amiable predilection for left-over medicines, he hits upon the saving remnant of humanity which lurks under an appalling

spectacle of decay or dissolution. It is not for nothing that Nexö was born in one of the poorest workingmen's quarters in Copenhagen, and that he followed his father's humble trade of stone-cutter: there is none of Dickens's middle-class snobbishness or sentimentalism in these epic narratives of Ditte and Pelle. This is proletarian literature; and it is literature. In the presence of Nexö and Hamsun one feels that, for once, the voice of the people may be the voice of God, and that, by the criterion they offer, a great deal of what passes for literature among more sophisticated people may in time prove no more substantial than rhinestones and paste.

L. C. M.

DR. ERSKINE'S volume on "The Literary Discipline"<sup>1</sup> calls less for criticism in the carping sense than most books. The author is almost always right; he gives invariably the right reasons to prove that he is right; and his being in the right never leads him into the common and lamentable fault of being puffed up with his rectitude. He conducts his discussion on a level of intelligence from which he never descends; and he holds his dogmas liberally, without a touch of that pedantry which dogmatism so generally involves. The subjects he treats are "drenched in matter": "Decency in Literature," "Originality in Literature," "The Cult of the Natural," "The Cult of the Contemporary," "The Characters Proper to Literature"; and on each one of them he utters the few paragraphs of common sense to which all of us must eventually come back after we have pursued the usual number of thrilling and paradoxical errors. If in spite of this the book does not make an exciting appeal, it is clearly because the author is not fundamental enough. He is always right; but he has little sense of life, and lacking that, he lacks also a deep sense of the significance of the truths he holds. He works with his reason, which is, of course, all to the good; but he should have worked with his imagination as well, thrusting down his definitions of literary categories until we should have seen their roots in life itself. So he gives an impression of stating elementary rather than essential truths; and his arguments, always intelligent, have the appearance of a textbook, which is a little repellent. But the fact remains that he does state some of the truths, accepted often before and no doubt often to be accepted again, upon the themes he treats; and that, in an age so confused as our own, will make his book profitable reading.

E. M.

SIGNOR BORGESE'S new novel<sup>2</sup> is in every respect a worthy successor to "Rubé"; it is written with delicacy and power, and accomplishes the difficult feat of winning an emotional response to a deeply introspective analysis. Borgese, however, has not gone a-hunting with Freud, however well adapted the book will prove to a study of a fixation upon the mother. He has, as it were, reversed the psychological process presented in "Rubé." The protagonist of that novel is a "lost man," eagerly seeking in action, in a war in which he does not really believe, some solution to the intellectual difficulties that beset him. Eliseo Gaddi, no less "lost," withdraws as eagerly from the whirlpool of existence. Of his mother—so succinctly yet so charmingly drawn in a book that she pervades from first to last—he might indeed have written what a somewhat kindred spirit wrote centuries ago in a similar connexion. She was "twice my mother," said St. Augustine: "in the flesh that I might be born into earthly light, in heart that I might be born into light eternal." It is that "light eternal" which casts a sort of darkness over Eliseo's days. He loves Illa, yet something comes between them; a something far less tangible, yet far more potent, than the mysterious Arianna who would keep him from Illa: Arianna with her theosophical aura and the abandon that makes of Eliseo a father without the joys of paternity. In the end, neither gets him. Gaddi returns to his mother, to the mother earth that will provide his ultimate refuge: and of his death, three years later, we are informed by a single line that closes the book. "I Vivi e i Morti" is more succinct, more rhythmic than "Rubé"; but it contains the same fine imagery and the same understanding of a soul conquered by modern life.

I. G.

<sup>1</sup> "The Love-Rogue." Harry Kemp. New York: Lieber and Lewis. \$1.75.

<sup>2</sup> "Midas and Proserpine: Two Unpublished Mythological Dramas." Mary Shelley. Edited with an Introduction by A. Koszul. London: Humphrey Milford.

<sup>3</sup> "Ditte: Towards the Stars." Martin Andersen Nexö. New York: Henry Holt and Co. \$2.00.

<sup>1</sup> "The Literary Discipline." John Erskine. New York: Duffield and Co. \$1.50.

<sup>2</sup> "I Vivi e i Morti." G. A. Borgese. Milan, Rome: A. Mandadori.



IT is a "hard-boiled" world that we live in. Or, rather, it is like the concoction known as Eskimo Pie: brown and hard on the outside and soft and white and gooey inside.

We are "practical" men until the surface is penetrated, and then a very messy sentimentalism is revealed; we Americans like to call it idealism. How much better if the surface were a little more flexible and the innards a little firmer!

This dualism of ours presents a singular study: we devote ourselves to promoting Negro "education," but obstruct the Negro's progress and permit him to be deprived of his Constitutional rights; we feed Russian children, and interfere with the economic development which might diminish the need for our charity; we give lavishly to Japan because thousands of her people lost their lives, yet many of us who helped to relieve her distress were planning and plotting to bring about that very result.

A less brittle outside, and sentiment instead of sentimentality inside, connote a higher civilization with its recognition of principles and standards. To grab what we want in Central America and then pay Colombia with a lordly gesture; to return the Boxer indemnity and then smile graciously on a Consortium, is not being civilized.

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